

The Bath of Leo the Wise and the “Macedonian Renaissance” Revisited: Topography, Iconography, Ceremonial, Ideology

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The purpose of the revisitation announced in the title of this article is twofold. It is first to correct certain errors and misconceptions which marred an earlier presentation of Leo Choiosphaktes’ anacreontic *ekphrasis* of a palace bath built by Emperor Leo VI (886–912).¹ Second, and more important, it is to place the evidence more precisely in its cultural context, by offering a fuller reconstruction of the identity, appearance, and function of the structure than I attempted in my preliminary study. While writing that study, I was acutely aware of raising more problems than I could solve. To some extent, those problems remain and are unlikely to vanish entirely, simply because the evidence itself is so extraordinary. Byzantine *ekphrasis* is difficult to evaluate at the best of times—witness the continuing debate over the architecture and decoration of the Church of the Holy Apostles, of which we have three descriptions as well as a number of mentions, schematic illustrations, and a few “copies.”² A laconic, allusive description of an otherwise unknown building packed into a hundred short lines of lyric verse (of which twenty-four, the three introductory strophes and the six *koukoulia*, or “refrains,” are entirely nondescriptive), can therefore hardly be expected to make things easy for the nonspectator. The problem is compounded by the unexpected nature of the object described. A bath-house adorned

with statues, relief sculptures, and representations of emperor and empress striking secular attitudes amid personified river gods, aquatic scenes in the antique manner, and a selection of animal, bird, and plant life, does not correspond to our idea of the sort of monument that a Byzantine emperor ought to have been commissioning at the beginning of the tenth century—certainly not an emperor who, despite his uncanonical married life, is otherwise known as a conventionally pious builder of churches and writer of hymns and homilies.³ Not only do we lack all comparative evidence for a canon of mid-Byzantine bath art and architecture, imperial or otherwise, analogous to that of the church or even the throne room.⁴ There is also no obvious way in which the iconography of the imperial portraits, either in themselves or in their full setting, corresponds to the set pieces and commonplaces of imperial panegyric, whether literary or artistic, with which we are familiar from this or earlier periods.

Nevertheless, further reflection and investiga-

³Church building: references in *Maistor*, 239 note 43; hymns and homilies: H. G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1957), 546–47; J. Grosdidier de Matons, “Trois études sur Léon VI,” *TM* 5 (1973), 198–206.

⁴That the domed vaults of bath chambers, like those of churches and throne rooms, were conventionally regarded as models of the cosmos and decorated accordingly seems clear from two pieces of evidence. One is the 6th-century *ekphrasis* by John of Gaza of a *tabula mundi* depicted in the dome of a winter bath in Gaza. The other is the astronomical cupola fresco in the *calidarium* of the 8th-century Ummayyad palace complex at Qusayr Amra, which was undoubtedly representative of local pre-Arab tradition. However, the great difference between these programs suggests that there was no single, standardized scheme, nor even any agreement on how much of the universe should be represented in the dome. See C. Cupane, “Il κοσμηδὸς πύναξ di Giovanni di Gaza, una proposta di ricostruzione,” *JÖB* 28 (1979), 195–209; K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I (Oxford, 1932), 289–303.

¹P. Magdalino, “The Bath of Leo the Wise,” *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine, and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, ed. Ann Moffatt, *Byzantina australiensia* 5 (Canberra, 1984), 225–40 (hereafter *Maistor*). For corrections and an amended text and translation, see below, Appendices 1 and 2.

²See A. W. Epstein, “The Rebuilding and Redecoration of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople: A Reconsideration,” *GRBS* 23 (1982), 79–92; Chr. G. Angelidi, “Ἡ περιγραφή τῶν Ἀγίων Ἀποστόλων ἀπὸ τὸν Κωνσταντῖνο Ρόδιο, ἀρχιτεκτονική καὶ συμβολισμός, Σύμμεικτα 5 (1983), 91–125.

tion have convinced me that both the text and the building are fully explicable in terms of ideas, values, and tastes that were current, although by no means uncontroversial, at the time. Thus I am led to both modify and substantiate the conclusions that I put forward at the end of my previous inquiry. On the one hand, I believe that the "message" of the bath was less secular, and more in tune with traditional conceptions of Christian monarchy, than I originally suggested. On the other hand, I am now more firmly convinced than ever that the building was a representative product of the "Macedonian Renaissance," and that if it strikes us as eccentric or unreal, our conception of that "Renaissance" must be revised or refined accordingly.

Once more, I am primarily concerned with the subject matter of the poem and not with its stylistic and linguistic features. The technical and aesthetic merits of a text that combines Homeric language with an anacreontic meter imitated from Sophronios of Jerusalem must be discussed by those who feel that they possess the necessary criteria.⁵ It is worth pointing out, however, that Leo Choiosphaktes was one of the more accomplished practitioners of the genre in the Middle Byzantine period, and that in this particular poem he displayed both skill and originality in composing an *ekphrasis* in lyric form. It is possible that he chose to do so in deference to Leo VI, who also had a penchant for composing anacreontics.⁶ Indeed, the vogue for this meter among literati of the ninth and tenth centuries might suggest that it was itself one of the "classical" revivals of the "Renaissance."⁷ Such, at least, is the impression given by the manuscript in which the vast majority of Byzantine anacreontics, including our poem, has survived: the Barberinianus graecus 310. In this deluxe anthology, the ninth- and tenth-century works clearly form a distinct group, separated from their models of the

sixth and seventh centuries by a large chronological gap.⁸ However, this indication of a total break in the use of the genre is not conclusive. If, as seems likely, the anthology was commissioned by Constantine VII,⁹ he or his editors would almost certainly have excluded works written under Iconoclasm. That anacreontics may have been composed at the court of the iconoclast emperors is suggested by the fact that they kept up the Brumalia celebrations and had songs composed for the occasion;¹⁰ both in the sixth century and in the ninth, anacreontic meter was used for Brumalia songs.¹¹ It is possible, therefore, that it survived throughout as a ceremonial medium.

This observation is not irrelevant to our understanding of the text with which we are concerned. Choiosphaktes' choice of anacreontic meter for his *ekphrasis* may have been dictated by the requirement that it be ceremonially sung. The theory that the poem was sung during the opening ceremony (*ἐγκαίνια*) of the building cannot be proved; however, it is certainly easier to make sense of the description when it is imagined in a sung, processional context.¹² The direct references to singing and dancing in the first two strophes of the poem tend to favor such an interpretation, just as similar references in two other poems of Choiosphaktes

⁵See the *pinax* of the manuscript (listing many works that have not survived) in *Spicilegium romanum*, IV (Rome, 1840), xxxvi–xl. The only author who may have been active in the 8th century was Elias Synkellos; if so, he was in the church of Jerusalem and therefore unrepresentative of Constantinopolitan culture, or lack of it: see Nissen, 47; Beck, *Kirche*, 604. On the role of Greeks under Arab rule in the Byzantine cultural revival, see Speck, "Ikonoklasmus," 204–5.

⁶It is in the same hand as the Berolinsensis Philipps 1538, a manuscript of the *Hippiatrica* which Constantine VII almost certainly commissioned as part of his "encyclopedia": N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London, 1983), 143; K. Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), 194–95; P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin* (Paris, 1971), 296.

⁷See the *Life of St. Stephen the Younger*, PG 100, col. 1169: Constantine V μετὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ ὁμοφρόνων κιθαρωδῶν μελέτην ἐποιεῖτο ἄσμιον καὶ Θεοῦ ἐχθρῶν πρὸς τὴν παρούσαν σπονδῆν. . . ; col. 1172: τὴν ἐχθρῶν Θεῷ τελετὴν. . . μετὰ κραυγῆς καὶ κιθαρῶν ἐκτελέσας. The description of the imperial Brumalia in the *Book of Ceremonies* mentions the participants singing ἴδια βασιλῆα for the occasion (*De cer.*, ed. J. Reiske [Bonn ed.], 600, 601).

⁸Nissen, 16.

⁹*Maistor*, 232. For anacreontics being set to music, see Nissen, 5, and the modal indications given in the titles to the poems of Photios cited above, note 7; cf. I. Ševčenko, "Poems on the Deaths of Leo VI and Constantine VII in the Madrid Manuscript of Scylitzes," *DOP* 23–24 (1969–70), 207; W. Hörandner, "Ein Alphabet in politischen Versen über Schöpfung und verlorenes Paradies," *Lirica greca da Archiloco a Elitis: Studi in onore di Filippo Maria Pontani* (Padua, 1984), 273–74.

⁵L. Petit in *DACL* 1 (1863–72); Th. Nissen, *Die byzantinischen Anakreonten*, SBMünchen, phil.-hist.Kl. (Munich, 1940), Heft 3 (hereafter Nissen), passim but esp. 27 ff, 59 ff; M. L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford, 1982), 169: "educated writers were able to produce quite correct anacreontics at a very late date." On Sophronios, cf. also Beck, *Kirche*, 434–35.

⁶P. Maas, "Literarisches zu der *Vita Euthymii*," *BZ* 21 (1912), 436–40; Nissen, 57–58; cf. P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii patriarchae CP* (Brussels, 1970), 81.

⁷This is implied by P. Speck, "Ikonoklasmus und die Anfänge der Makedonischen Renaissance," in *Varia I*, Freie Universität Berlin, Byzantinisch-neugriechisches Seminar, Παιδικὰ βυζαντινά 4 (Bonn, 1984), 192. The 9th- and 10th-century practitioners included Leo the Mathematician, Photios, and Arethas: see following note and, for Photios, PG 102, cols. 577 ff.

in the same collection would seem to indicate that these were written to be sung at one of Leo's weddings, probably the fourth.¹³ Despite the religious use to which the anacreontic had been put, it was by definition the medium of *secular* celebration.¹⁴ As such, it had a traditional association not only with the secular winter festival of the Brumalia but also with the equivalent summer festival of the Rosalia,¹⁵ which, it will be argued below, must be taken into account when considering the circumstances in which Leo's bath was built.

LOCATION

In the absence of precise topographical indications, or clear corroborative evidence in other sources, the exact location of the building must remain a matter of some conjecture. However, as I argued previously, there is a case for identifying the bath with the one that Leo VI is known to have built at "Marina's" (τὰ Μαρίνης), on the northeastern confines of the Great Palace.¹⁶ It is now proposed to take this argument one stage further and to identify both baths with the mysterious Bath of the Oikonomeion mentioned in the *Patria*, which claims that it was built by Constantine the Great, that it stood next to the Tzykanisterion or imperial polo ground, and that it was heated until the reign of Nikephoros II (962–969), after which John I (969–976) had it demolished and used its materials in the building of the Chalke church.¹⁷ The only part of this information that need not be

taken seriously is the attribution to Constantine. An attribution to Leo VI, however, makes sense for several reasons:

1. The Bath of the Oikonomeion must have been so called because of the proximity of a building that served as the office of an *oikonomos*, that is, the clerical steward of the property of a religious foundation. We do not need to look very hard for such an institution in the neighborhood of the Tzykanisterion: the *Vita Basilii* expressly states that it was here, on the seaward (i.e., eastern) side of the courtyard, that Basil I erected a building to serve as the "*oikonomeion* or treasury" of his new imperial church, the Nea Ekklesia.¹⁸ A bath in this area called τοῦ Οἰκονομείου is therefore unlikely to have acquired this name before Basil I started work on the Nea in 876–7.¹⁹ Of course, it could have been in existence long before it acquired the name, but if so, it cannot have been a *palace* bath before Basil's reign, because the site of the Tzykanisterion was occupied by private houses (οἰκήματα), until Basil, having decided to build the Nea on the old polo ground, purchased them in order to lay out the new one.²⁰ The existence of an otherwise unattested monumental *public* bath among these houses is unlikely.²¹

2. Τὰ Μαρίνης—"Marina's"—adjoined the palace on the northeastern side, that is, in the direction in which Basil extended the palace when he laid out the new Tzykanisterion and its surrounding buildings.²² By the time of Leo VI, therefore, the name could have come to be used of at least a part of the new complex.

3. The monastery of St. Lazaros, perhaps Leo VI's most important ecclesiastical foundation, was in the same general area: to reach it from the central palace area, one had to go via the Tzykanisterion.²³

4. The Bath of the Oikonomeion was ἐνζωδον,

¹³Ed. P. Matrangola, *Anecdota graeca* (Rome, 1850), 561–65; ed. Th. Bergk, *Poetae lyrici graeci*, III (Leipzig, 1882), 356–58. That the occasion was Leo VI's controversial fourth marriage to Zoe Karbounopsina was inferred by Kolias from the insistence, in the second of these poems (lines 19 ff, 33–34), on the legality of the union: G. Kolias, *Léon Choerosphactès, magistre, proconsul et patrice*, TFByzNgPhil 31 (Athens, 1939), 51 note 1. If the inference is correct, this would suggest that Zoe was the empress portrayed in the bath. The suggestion receives further support from the fact that Choerosphactes addresses this empress as φιλάδελφε (line 42); there is good reason to think that he was the Byzantine ambassador to Baghdad in 906–7 who is identified in a reliable Arab source as the emperor's brother-in-law: see *The History of al-Tabari*, trans. F. Rosenthal, xxxviii: *The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad* (Albany, 1985), 181; Kolias, op. cit., 17–18, 114–15; R. J. H. Jenkins, "Leo Choerosphactes and the Saracen Vizier," *ZR* 8.1 (1963), 167–75.

¹⁴Nissen, 3–4. For ancient examples, mainly from the *Greek Anthology*, see M. L. West, *Carmina anacreontea* (Leipzig, 1984).

¹⁵Nissen, 15.

¹⁶*Maistor*, 233; R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* (Paris, 1950), 357.

¹⁷Th. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig, 1907), II, 145; cf. C. Mango, "Daily Life in Byzantium," *JÖB* 31.1 (1981), 340–41 (rpr. in idem, *Byzantium and Its Image* [London, 1984]); A. Berger, *Das Bad in der byzantinischen Zeit*, *MiscByzMonac* 27 (Munich, 1982), 153–54.

¹⁸Theophanes Continuatus, 328. On the Nea, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin, I: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique, III: Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 361 ff; G. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1984), 243–47.

¹⁹Theoph. Cont., 691 (Pseudo-Symeon).

²⁰Theoph. Cont., 328.

²¹Among attested *thermae*, the only possible candidate is the Baths of Arkadianai: Berger, *Das Bad*, 145; Janin, *CP byzantine*, 292–93.

²²The source is Leo Grammaticus, p. 252, referring to events that took place before the extensions were made. Cf. Janin, *CP byzantine*, 357; R. Guiland, *Etudes de topographie de Constantinople byzantine* (Berlin-Amsterdam, 1969), I, 257.

²³Leo Gramm., 273.

that is, decorated with statues, as was the building described by Choïrosphaktes.

Against the identification here proposed, there would seem to be two possible objections. First, would the author of the relevant section of the *Patria* have attributed the Bath of the Oikonomeion to Constantine the Great if it had been built by an emperor whose reign, like the destruction of the building, was fairly recent history, and who was certainly known to patriography as the builder of the nearby monastery of St. Lazaros?²⁴ This objection loses much of its force when it is noted that the *Patria* credits Constantine the Great with at least one other building, the church of St. Theophano, which was patently the work of a tenth-century emperor, in this case Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos.²⁵ Since the latter is known to have restored Leo's bath at "Marina's," this could have been the source of the confusion.²⁶ Equally likely is that the Bath of the Oikonomeion, with its statues and obvious attempts at cosmic symbolism, looked to a tenth-century observer as if it ought to belong to a much earlier period than the church foundations of Basil I and Leo VI with which it was associated.

It is here, however, that the second objection arises. The Bath of the Oikonomeion is said to have had twelve "stoas," corresponding to the months of the year, and seven ἐνθῆκαι, corresponding to the planets. Yet the description of Leo VI's bath mentions neither of these distinctive features. This would seem to be a fairly strong indication that we are not, after all, dealing with one and the same building. However, too much cannot be made of the silence of the *ekphrasis*, on this or any other point. As has already been observed, its literary form, and perhaps the processional context of its delivery, necessarily made it highly selective in its information. Notably, it shows a distinct concentration on the figural decoration (which claims at least forty-eight out of the seventy-six effectively descriptive lines of the poem) at the expense of the architecture. A brief reconsideration of the few architectural features it does mention will show that these are not irreconcilable with the evidence of the *Patria*.

ARCHITECTURE

The building consisted of at least two parts, a long entrance hall or portico (προδόμος μακρὸς; line 21), and a main chamber containing a hot pool, said to be "in an octaconch" (line 81). There was at least one dome and one apse, and, in one part of the complex at least, a domed, absidal structure was contained within colonnaded or porticoed corridors. Any conclusions drawn from this information are bound to be extremely speculative. However, it is fairly clear that the main hot chamber was domed: whether the eight niches of the "octaconch" were merely semicircular bays of the hot pool, or whether they were structural features of the building, this must have had a centralized plan of the type that, with infinite minor variations, was used in many kinds of buildings, notably baptisteries.²⁷ The main problem, then, is to decide whether it was this or some other structure whose "gilded work in dome and conch" (θολοκογχόχρυσον ἔργον; line 27) lay within the colonnaded corridors. No more definitive solution to this problem can be proposed here than was proposed previously: it is possible to visualize the arrangement either in terms of a central pool area divided by a circular colonnade from a surrounding ambulatory,²⁸ or in terms of a separate domed, colonnaded chamber with lateral apses—a warm room perhaps, or a changing room—from which the hot chamber was entered. The former interpretation has the merit of being less speculative, while the latter is more appropriate to the theory that the poem was written for a ceremonial occasion and took the audience through a series of locations to which it *alludes* in strict order but does not enumerate explicitly.

There is, however, a further consideration which may allow us to take the discussion a stage further. Both of the interpretations advanced so far are based on the assumption that the expression θολοκογχόχρυσον ἔργον has to refer exclusively to gilding on the inside of the dome(s) and apse(s) in question; that is, to mosaic work with a

²⁴ Preger, *Scriptores*, 288.

²⁵ Ibid. (cf. also p. 282); Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, 245; G. Downey, "The Church of All Saints (Church of St. Theophano) near the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople," *DOP* 10 (1956), 301–5.

²⁶ Theoph. Cont., 460–61.

²⁷ For two contemporary examples, see J. Morganstern, *The Byzantine Church at Dereagzi and Its Decoration*, IM, Beiheft 29 (Tübingen, 1983), 65–77; for origins and variations, see R. Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" *JWarb* 5 (1942), 20 ff; Ch. Bouras, *Nea Moni on Chios: History and Architecture* (Athens, 1982), 132–45.

²⁸ As, e.g., in S. Costanza and the Lateran Baptistery in Rome: R. Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, 1972), 25–26, 49–52.

base of gold tesserae. The assumption is natural in view of the well-known preference for this medium in church and palace decoration, and in view of the relative unimportance of exterior ornamentation in Byzantine aesthetics. However, Leo's bath may have been fairly unusual in this respect. Unlike most other Middle Byzantine palace buildings, it was adorned with gilded stonework "sprouting" with statues: the mention of this in the second strophe, before the reader—or onlooker—is directed toward the entrance hall, strongly suggests that it was an external feature. Moreover, there was in Leo's day at least one nearby building of fairly recent construction where gilding, or the appearance of it, had been applied to the exterior. According to the description of the Nea Ekklesia in the *Vita Basilii*, "Its roof, consisting of five domes, gleams with gold and is resplendent with beautiful images as with stars, while on the outside it is adorned with brass that resembles gold."²⁹ It is conceivable, therefore, that by *θολοκογχόχρυσον ἔργον* we should understand *exterior* gilding of this kind, rather than, or indeed—just as in the *Vita Basilii*—as well as gold mosaic work on the inside. This interpretation has two consequences for our reconstruction of the building. First, it makes it unnecessary to postulate the existence of domes and apses outside the main chamber. Second, it allows us to envisage the "colonnaded corridors" as exterior porticoes, perhaps in the form of concentric galleries, as in S. Stefano Rotondo in Rome,³⁰ or, alternatively, forming cloistered courtyards on more than one side. Here we are reminded of the enigmatic twelve stoas in the bath of the Oikonomieion.³¹ The number twelve need not perhaps be taken too literally. However, if we accept that the two descriptions apply to the same building, we also have to account for the even more mysterious

seven *enthekai*. A possible clue to their identity lies in the mention of an octaconch, which, as we have seen, implies an octagonal structure, or a circular one divided radially into eight segments. One of these segments must have corresponded to the entrance. The other seven could well have corresponded to seven niches or recesses serving as reclining areas and, perhaps, containing basins of cold water. It is in some such arrangement that the explanation of the seven *enthekai* may have to be sought. Again, a parallel is to be found in one of Basil I's church buildings: the palace chapel that he dedicated to the Prophet Elias—of whom more later—had seven radial apses, according to the information of a later description.³²

Given the well-attested use of spoils in the building programs of the Middle Byzantine period, it is quite likely that much of the building material was taken from other buildings, such as the great public baths of Zeuxippos, the Constant(in)ianae, Dagistheos, or the nearby Arcadianae.³³ It is also conceivable that Leo's bath incorporated the structures or substructures of the imperial *oikos* of Marina, the core of which was presumably a Theodosian palace complex similar to those that have been excavated on the north side of the Hippodrome.³⁴

FIGURAL DECORATION

The description of the figural decoration, which, as we have noted, is the main object of the writer's attention, falls into three unequal parts: (1) a mention of statues on gilded pedestals, (2) a more informative mention of sculptures which decorated the inside of the entrance hall and represented battle scenes, and (3) a thorough enumeration of a series of representations of the following subjects: the emperor, holding a sword (lines 33–36); the empress, strewing flower petals (37–44); river gods, with "fiercely turned faces" (45–47); metrical encomia (48); aquatic scenes, showing the

²⁹Theoph. Cont., 326; trans. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), 194.

³⁰R. Krautheimer, "Success and Failure in Late Antique Church Planning," *The Age of Spirituality, A Symposium*, ed. K. Weitzmann (New York, 1980), 121 ff.

³¹Although, at the same time, we must note another meaning of the word *stoa*, attested in the late 9th-century Διήγησις of the building of St. Sophia, where it seems to mean a vaulted basin: Preger, *Scriptores*, I, 103; G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire: Etudes sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris, 1984), 202, 207; cf. also the "five stoas" in the biblical Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2). Berger, *Das Bad*, 101–2, takes the stoas in the Bath of the Oikonomieion to be hot rooms, presumably following in this the opinion of Koukoules, who cites the parallel of the Roman bath in Gortyn, Crete, which had twelve heated *tholoi*: Malalas, 359–61; Ph. Koukoules, *Βυζαντινὸν βίος καὶ πολιτισμός*, IV (Athens, 1951), 434 note 9.

³²See Nicholas Mesarites, ed. A. Heisenberg, *Die Palastrevelution des Johannes Komnenos*, Programm des königlichen alten Gymnasiums zu Würzburg für das Studienjahr 1906/7 (Würzburg, 1907), 38: κυκλοτερὴς γὰρ ὁ τοῦ Ἡλίου ναὸς. . . ὑφ' ἐπτὰ βημάτων εὐσέμων περιυροῦμενος. Cf. Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, 136–37.

³³On these and their fate, see Berger, *Das Bad*, Index I, s.v.; Mango, "Daily Life," 339–41. On the use of spoils in the Middle Byzantine period, see note 17 above, and Theoph. Cont., 691 (Ps.-Sym.); Michael Psellos, *Scripta minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, I (Milan, 1936), 298 ff; C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York, 1976), 203.

³⁴W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexicon zur Topographie Istanbul* (Tübingen, 1977), 122–25, 238–39.

catching of fish by various means (51–52); fish banquets spread on islands in the water (53–54); the female personification of a spring (55–58); a songbird at the emperor's feet (63–66); a serpent (δράκων) (73); a lion (74); a crane (75–76); a tree with golden leaves, full of fruit or birds (77–80); and a griffin breathing flames (87–90).

The possibility of some overlap between the various parts of the description cannot entirely be excluded; thus it may be that (2) and (3) pick up what has already been announced in (1). On the whole, however, this is unlikely. The sculptures representing battle scenes can only have been reliefs rather than freestanding statues on pedestals, and although some elements in (3), notably the imperial representations, could have been statues, others, such as the fishing and fish banquet scenes, strongly suggest a pictorial medium. In the discussion that follows, therefore, it will be assumed that the three sections of the description refer to separate areas of the building: (1) to the outside, (2) to the entrance hall, and (3) to an inner room or rooms. It should be stressed, however, that these and further assumptions are based on our knowledge of Middle Byzantine churches, and on a profound ignorance of the way that other buildings were decorated. Since we are dealing with an unusual building, we should not exclude the possibility of unusual decorative features, such as figural reliefs in stucco³⁵ or terra-cotta,³⁶ or figural mosaics on the outside of the building.³⁷

Before proceeding to an analysis of (3), we should pause to consider the likely nature and provenance of the statues and relief sculptures. Given the complete lack of evidence for the production of statues and narrative reliefs in the ninth and tenth centuries, and given, too, some indications that Basil I and Constantine VII, in their improvements to the palace, made ornamental use of statuary brought from other parts of the city, it is

a fair assumption that the statues and sculptures in Leo's bath were among the many spoils that went into the construction of the building.³⁸ Two statues used by Basil I in the construction of the Nea Ekklesia came from the Senate House and the Basilica.³⁹ Another source of statues for the palace was the Baths of the Constant(in)ianae: the combined evidence of the *Parastaseis* and *Patria* indicates that by the tenth century two statues of Perseus and Andromeda from this building had been set up near the Tzykanisterion.⁴⁰ If, as seems likely, the new Tzykanisterion is meant, the emperor who moved them was probably one of the Macedonians. The presence of statues from the Constant(in)ianae—called by the *Patria* the “Baths of Constantine”—could, perhaps, have contributed to the belief that the Bath of the Oikonomeion, which we have identified with Leo's bath, was one of Constantine the Great's constructions. It is also possible that some of the statues in the Baths of Zeuxippos found their way into the palace.⁴¹

As for the relief sculptures, these are most likely to have come from ancient sarcophagi, or from the frieze or metopes of an ancient temple. The expression ζαθέων . . . γερόντων (line 23) suggests that the theme of the battle scenes might have been that of the struggle between gods and titans (Gigantomachia). According to Constantine of Rhodes, a sculptural representation of this theme, brought from Ephesos by Constantine the Great, adorned the wall of the Senate House in the Forum, and it is not impossible that the pieces used by Leo originally belonged to the same program.⁴²

The representations enumerated in the third, and most important, part of the description pose major problems of interpretation. In what medium, or media, were they executed? Were they

³⁸Theoph. Cont., 447, 691–92 (Ps.-Sym.).

³⁹C. Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder,” *DOP* 17 (1963), 62 (rpr. in *Byzantium and Its Image*); Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 249.

⁴⁰*Parastaseis*, chap. 85; ed. Averil Cameron and J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), 162–63; *Patria*, ed. Preger, *Scriptores*, II, 195.

⁴¹The famous collection of statues celebrated by Christodorus of Koptos in Book II of the *Palatine Anthology* was destroyed in the fire following the Nika Riot in 532, but some attempt was made to replace it in Justinian's rebuilding of the Bath: cf. R. Stupperich, “Das Statuenprogramm in den Zeuxippos-Thermen,” *IM* 32 (1982), 213.

⁴²E. Legrand, “Description des oeuvres d'art et de l'église des Saints Apôtres de Constantinople,” *REG* 9 (1896), 40, lines 130 ff. In a 10th-century manuscript illumination (Paris, Suppl. gr. 247, fol. 47v) based on a depiction of the Gigantomachia, the Giants are represented with serpents' tails, exactly as in the panels described by Constantine: see Weitzmann, *Studies*, 142.

³⁵As in the Orthodox Baptistery at Ravenna: F. W. Deichmann, *Ravenna, Geschichte und Monumente*, I (Wiesbaden, 1969), 93–95, 137–38; cf. also Theodore Balsamon on Canon 100 of the Council in Trullo, ed. G. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θεῶν καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, II (Athens, 1852; rpr. 1966), 545–46; trans. Mango, *Art*, 234.

³⁶This medium was highly developed at the contemporary Bulgarian royal court, where its use may reflect Byzantine fashion: cf. T. Totev, “L'atelier de céramique peinte du monastère royal de Preslav,” *CahArch* 35 (1987), 65–80.

³⁷Cf. the description of portrait mosaics on the outside of a baptistery: ed. Chr. Walz, *Rhetores graeci*, I (Tübingen, 1832), 641. The building evidently dated from no earlier than the 9th century, since it was part of a monastery and contained a raised font (as opposed to a pool for adult immersion).

made to order, or were they too, to a greater or lesser extent, a collage of earlier works of art? Were they displayed in one or more than one chamber? Underlying all these questions is an even more basic one: to what extent is the poet describing, and alluding to, what he sees or is meant to see, and to what extent is he "interpolating"? This question is particularly crucial for the interpretation of the section (lines 59–80) in which the author develops the theme of a chorus of praise for the emperor, involving not only the fauna and flora but also doors and rushing waters.

In my previous discussion, I suggested that the representations of the imperial couple, river gods, and aquatic scenes were wall and ceiling mosaics, displayed *either* in and around the main apse of the bath chamber *or* in the dome. I further suggested that the other figures could have been either waterspouts, perhaps automata, or mosaic representations. On the whole, I inclined to the view that all the representations constituted a single mosaic program in the dome, depicting the emperor's cosmic kingship. But any interpretation remains speculative, and any further attempt to solve the problem *directly* by closer analysis of the descriptive details can only result in greater speculation, for it is clear that the range of variant hypotheses has by no means been exhausted. One might argue, for example, that the allusion to the doors marks a transition from one chamber to another (e.g., *tepidarium* to *calidarium*), and that the representations described from this point (line 59) were thus in a different room from those of the imperial couple, river gods, and aquatic scenes. Yet another possibility is that the fauna and flora were reliefs on a pair of bronze doors.

A more fruitful line of inquiry may be to examine the decoration not so much in terms of what it looked like but more in terms of what, if anything, it was meant to signify. In other words, was the program purely decorative, and were its separate elements no more than that, or did they add up to a coherent pictorial statement, like the iconographic program of a contemporary church or imperial throne room? This question is not only central to the question of visual reconstruction; it is also, ultimately, the more important for our understanding of the monument as a cultural phenomenon.

On first reading, the description yields no clear evidence for any "propaganda" content in the representations. It seems to make little attempt to *interpret* what it describes. It points to no functional

connection between the various scenes, beyond its apparently banal and contrived image of the waters, doors, and various animal figures as a chorus of praise. The poet emphasizes not the inner, intellectual meanings of the depictions but the immediate, sensual impressions that they make: the rosiness of the imperial faces, the fierceness of the river gods, the delightfulness of the water scenes, the golden grace of the tree, the blue (sic) feathers of the crane, the terror inspired by the griffin's fiery breath. If the representations were intentionally semiotic, this intention is not brought out by the poem, except in the significant allusion to the wisdom of the snake. In short, since the poem, a piece of court rhetoric praising the emperor through the description and evocation of works of art that he commissioned, does not describe these works in terms of symbolic meaning, it would seem reasonable to conclude that they had no such meaning and were merely an eclectic ornamental ensemble, combining "classical" personifications and genre scenes with heraldic animals in an "oriental" manner.⁴³

On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that there was more to the works of art in question, and to the poetic description of them, than the impression of hedonistic eclecticism that they seemingly convey. First, the inclusion and prominence of the imperial portraits strongly suggest that the ensemble was a pictorial statement about the nature of imperial monarchy, in particular about the emperor's wisdom, which is stressed again and again throughout the poem, and the emperor's role as *γεοῦχος*, "ruler of the earth," as symbolized by the sword that he wields.⁴⁴ Second, the mention of verse inscriptions shows that the pictorial statement was accompanied by a textual commentary of sorts. This has important implications for the understanding of our text, whose lack of exegesis can thus be explained as an avoidance of repetition, and whose image of a hymn of praise thus appears as a very telling allusion. Third, the catalogue of representations is by no means as casual and uncoordinated as might appear at first sight. Having given pride of place to the emperor and empress, it then lists figures and scenes that portray or symbolize the cosmos and its four constituent elements of water, earth, air, and fire, in a gen-

⁴³Cf. A. Grabar, "Le succès des arts orientaux à la cour byzantine sous les Macédoniens," *L'art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1968), 265–90.

⁴⁴Cf. J. Verpeaux, *Pseudo-Kodinos, Traité des offices* (Paris, 1966), 202.

erally hierarchical sequence. Naturally enough, in the context, special emphasis is given to the first and last of these, and to the paradoxical union of these two purifying agents and cosmic extremes that Leo, by his wisdom, produces in the healing hot waters of his bath. In sum, therefore, if the various elements of the description are taken with the encomiastic sentiments expressed at intervals, the literary and artistic compositions can be understood as a coordinated celebration of the emperor's wisdom and cosmic kingship. This interpretation becomes more plausible when it is noted that our text is not, in this respect, a *hapax*. It invites close comparison with a slightly later verse *ekphrasis* by John Geometres of an unidentified *locus amoenus*, probably a building in the imperial palace, restored or built by a mid tenth-century emperor.⁴⁵ In meter, language, and style, this poem is very different from ours, and yet it shows strong thematic similarities: progression from outside to inside and from lower to higher orders of creation, all in a context of praise for the emperor as wise master and creator.

If this general interpretation is accepted as a working hypothesis, the problem is now to identify and explain the specific means by which the artistic celebration was achieved, and to assess the derivation or originality of both the choice of representations and the composition as a whole. In confronting the problem, it is first important to decide whether the overall "message" of the imagery was basically religious or secular. The immediate impression is undoubtedly one of secularity. There are no icons or crosses, such as were often found in Byzantine baths.⁴⁶ The emperor with his sword, the symbol of worldly power,⁴⁷ and the empress with her flowers, are neither portrayed nor celebrated in the role of pious imitators of Christ—in complete contrast to other attestations of imperial art in the period after Iconoclasm, in all of which

the earthly monarch's imitation of, and dependence on, the divine monarchy is made very explicit.⁴⁸

It seems, however, extremely doubtful that a medieval composition including a portrait of a Christian ruler could have been entirely devoid of religious significance. Here again, the solution may lie in what the poem does not say—or says only indirectly—because it was already obvious to the audience and because the poet had only a hundred short lines at his disposal. There are, in fact, two indications that the composition not only lent itself to orthodox Christian interpretation but was also predominantly of religious inspiration. One is the allusion to *θειόλογα δόγματα* in the *koukoulion* that follows the strophe mentioning the river gods and the metrical inscriptions. The other is the image of a vast, cosmic chorus of praise, which would clearly put a Byzantine audience in mind of certain Old Testament texts in which all created things are urged to praise their Creator: for example, Psalm 148 and the hymn sung by the three children in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:52–90). The latter was, of course, not inappropriate to the context of a heated bath.

Once the possibility of a Christian inspiration is allowed, most of the representations become easier to identify and interpret. Above all, the river gods can plausibly be identified as personifications of the Four Rivers of Paradise: Phison, Geon, Tigris, and Euphrates (Gen. 2:10–14). Although such personifications are more common in western medieval than in Early Christian or Byzantine art,⁴⁹ they were not entirely foreign to the artistic traditions of the Greek East. They are depicted in two sixth-century mosaic floors, one in a baptistery at Ochrid,⁵⁰ and the other in the nave of a church at Nea Theodorias (Qasr el-Lebya) in Cyrenaica.⁵¹ The lack of Byzantine parallels for these portrayals, and the lack of artistic resemblance between

⁴⁵ J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota graeca e codd. manuscriptorum bibliothecae regiae parisiensis* (Paris, 1861; rpr. Hildesheim, 1967), IV, 276–78 (= PG 106, cols. 912 ff). Much of the description is suggestive of a garden, with pools, fountains, and sculptures—perhaps waterspouts in the form of birds—but there is also a reference to "constructions" (*δόμοι*) and their interior decoration (p. 277, lines 27–28). The work appears to have been written in praise of a reigning emperor. Of the rulers under whom Geometres lived, Constantine VII is the most likely, in view of his attested improvements to the Great Palace, and palace buildings elsewhere (Theoph. Cont., 447, 450–52); the text could even refer to his restoration of Leo's bath (ibid., 460–61).

⁴⁶ See Mango, "Daily Life," 339; Berger, *Das Bad*, 111.

⁴⁷ The secularity of the symbol is demonstrated by the comment of Pseudo-Kodinos referred to above (note 44) and by the hostile reaction to Isaac I's coin portrait of himself wielding a sword; for references, see Maistor, 238 note 40.

⁴⁸ See A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, 1936; rpr. London, 1971), 172 ff; K. Corrigan, "The Ivory Scepter of Leo the Wise," *ArtB* 60 (1978), 407–16; Z. Gavrilović, "The Humiliation of Leo VI the Wise," *CahArch* 28 (1979), 87–94, esp. 89–90.

⁴⁹ E. Schlee, *Ikongraphie der Paradiesflüsse* (Leipzig, 1937).

⁵⁰ V. Bitrakova-Grozdanova, *Starohristijanski spomenici vo Ohridsko* (Ochrid, 1975), 54–64; cf. G. Babić, "North Chapel of the Quatrefoil Church at Ohrid and Its Mosaic Floor," *ZR* 13 (1971), 274.

⁵¹ E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum and J. Ward-Perkins, *Justinianic Mosaic Pavements in Cyrenaican Churches*, Monografie di archeologia libica 14 (Rome, 1980), 37–40; cf. also G. Mathew, *Byzantine Aesthetics* (London, 1963), 86 and A. Grabar, "Une nouvelle interprétation de certaines images de la mosaïque de pavement de Qasr-el-Lebya (Libye)," *CRAI* (1969), 264–78, rpr. in idem, *L'art paléochrétien et l'art byzantin* (London, 1979).

them, might suggest that they are to be seen as idiosyncratic or provincial creations, especially since both were executed close to the cultural frontier with the Latin West. However, it is equally possible that they represent a transfer to floor level of subject matter that was more commonly depicted on walls and ceilings of church buildings, especially baptisteries and ecclesiastical baths. Several features of the description by Choirosphaktes suggest that the whole "aquatic cycle" of Leo's bath was borrowed from some such religious context. First, there is the allusion to a flowing spring in the personified form of a young girl (lines 57–58): no depiction of the Four Rivers of Paradise would be complete without a representation of the Fountain of Life from which they derived.⁵² Second, there is the invocation to certain youths (κοῦροι) to "write divine doctrines" (line 49). The fact that this occurs in the *koukoulion* following the strophe that mentions both the river gods and the metrical inscriptions would seem to indicate not only that the "divine doctrines" were contained in the inscriptions, but also that the *kouroi* are the river gods, which would also fit the allusion, in the second line of the *koukoulion*, to rain descending from "god-like" mouths.⁵³ In the light of these remarks, the rivers can be none other than those that traditionally symbolized the Four Evangelists, the sources of divine teaching.

Third, the other elements of the aquatic cycle are clearly consistent with such Christian symbolism, which, indeed, they confirm and develop. It requires no great leap of imagination to see the fishermen as the Apostles, the waters from which they draw their catch as the waters of baptism, and the fish meals as the life-giving food prepared for the faithful by Christ's Church.⁵⁴

The identification of the personified rivers as the Four Rivers of Paradise becomes even more plausible when the aquatic cycle is seen in the context of Byzantine imperial ideology, in relation to the imperial portraits that dominated the ensemble. In the Qasr el-Lebya mosaic, the panels depicting the Four Rivers are associated with four others celebrating Creation (Κτίσις), Adornment (Κόσμησις), and the Renewal (Ἀνανέωσις) of the city of Nea Theodorias. Although not mentioned

by Procopius, this was almost certainly one of the cities refounded by Justinian.⁵⁵ In other words, it seems that the Four Rivers of Paradise had a place in the iconography of imperial *renovatio*, a theme that, as is well known, was heavily exploited in the dynastic propaganda of the Macedonian emperors.⁵⁶ The specifically Justinianic context of the Qasr el-Lebya mosaic is also worth emphasizing. Among the great predecessors whom Basil I and Leo VI sought to emulate, Justinian was not only the classic exponent of *renovatio*, but also the legislator par excellence, for whom Leo VI had a special regard when he undertook his *anakatharsis* of the Corpus of Roman Law.⁵⁷ It is at least a reasonable conjecture that the iconography of Leo's bath was inspired by a sixth-century building, perhaps a bath or baptistery attached to one of the many churches that Justinian had rebuilt.

Perhaps more important as far as Leo was concerned, the Four Rivers of Paradise, being symbols of the Four Evangelists, were, by extension, symbols of divine Wisdom, the quality that the poem celebrates as the emperor's special attribute. Again, the symbolism is made explicit in the Qasr el-Lebya mosaic, by the addition of a panel portraying earthly wisdom in the person of the Castalian Spring, shown as a reclining nymph. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether she is meant to complement or to contrast with the river personifications, and hence whether her inclusion represents the harmonious coexistence of divine and earthly wisdom or the resurgence of the former at the expense of pagan prophecy, which has run dry.⁵⁸ We should, therefore, hesitate to equate this figure with the spring nymph depicted in Leo's

⁵⁵ But, *pace* Grabar, *op. cit.*, it is not to be confused with Vaga Theodoriana in Numidia, on which see D. Pringle, *The Defence of Byzantine Africa from Justinian to the Arab Conquest*, BAR, International Series 99 (Oxford, 1981), I, 250–52.

⁵⁶ See A. Vogt and I. Hausherr, *Oraison funèbre de Basile Ier par son fils Léon VI le Sage*, *Orientalia christiana* 26 (Rome, 1932), 56–58; P. Alexander, "The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes," *Speculum* 37 (1962), 349–51, *rpr.* in *idem*, *Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire* (London, 1978).

⁵⁷ See Leo VI, *Novels*, prooemium and Nov. 1; N. Van der Wal, "Edictum und lex edictalis," *RIDA*, 3rd ser., 28 (1981), 309–10; A. Schminck, "'Rota tu volubilis': Kaisermacht und Patriarchenmacht in Mosaiken," *Cupido legum*, ed. L. Burgmann, M. Th. Fögen, A. Schminck (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 232; *idem*, *Studien zu mittelbyzantinischen Rechtsbüchern* (Frankfurt, 1986); G. Prinzing, "Das Bild Justinians I. in der Überlieferung der Byzantiner vom 7.–15. Jahrhundert," *Fontes minores* 7 (1986), 56–57.

⁵⁸ Cf. Grabar, "Qasr-el-Lebya," 277–78. One cannot conclude from the reclining pose of the nymph that she has gone out of business, since such a pose was quite normal: see, e.g., E. Wellesz, *The Vienna Genesis* (London, 1960), 9 and pl. 3.

⁵² P. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life," *DOP* 5 (1950), 43–138.

⁵³ This is perhaps an indication that the river gods were shown actually *spouting* water, as in the Ochrid mosaic (above, note 50).

⁵⁴ See *DACL* 7.2, 1990 ff; E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1964), V, chaps. 1–2, esp. pp. 20–21, 50 ff.

bath, especially if the latter is to be identified in a biblical sense as the Fountain of Life. At the same time, we should allow for the possibility that the identity of the nymph in question was deliberately ambiguous, and we should note that if Leo's consort depicted in the bath was, as seems likely, Zoe Karbounopsina, then the personification of the Fountain of Life (Ζωή) in the form of a nymph would have given a twist to the symbolism at least as daring, in Christian terms, as the portrayal of the Castalian Spring in action.⁵⁹

Whatever the role of the spring nymph, the role of the river gods in relation to the emperor seems quite clear. They, the authors of θεολόγα δόγματα, are his attributes and associates. He draws from them; at the same time, his commanding presence and drawn sword show him to rule over them, as the *typos* of the principle (ἀρχή) from which they, the sources of wisdom, originate, along with the spiritual bounty that they bring forth. In this, of course, he is all but explicitly equated with Christ the Logos.

The interpretation of the aquatic cycle as an allegory of imperial wisdom does not, however, exhaust the significance of these scenes, which can be understood in two further senses. First, the Four Rivers of Paradise were taken to be the four great rivers of the *oikoumene*, the Geon being identified with the Nile and the Phison with the Danube.⁶⁰ Of the four, only the headwaters of the Euphrates came anywhere near the Byzantine frontiers of Leo VI's day. However, all had in one way or another marked the limits of Justinian's empire, to which the Byzantines still laid claim. Their personifications would thus almost certainly have been meant to advertise the territorial restoration of the Roman Empire to which Basil I and his successors were committed, at least in principle.⁶¹

⁵⁹ See above, note 13, and below, p. 108.

⁶⁰ Severian of Gabala, PG 56, col. 478. Other traditions identified the Phison with other rivers: Cosmas Indicopleustes, II.81, ed. W. Wolska-Conus, *Topographie chrétienne*, II (Paris, 1968), 399–401 (Ganges: cf. also St. John Damascene, PG 94, col. 904); J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977), 67, 199 (Nile); Moscow, State Historical Museum, Ms. 129D, fol. 117r (Jordan), reproduced in M. V. Shchepkina, *Miniatury Khludovskoj Psaltyri* (Moscow, 1977). But Byzantine opinion of the 10th century seems to have favored the Danube: see Leo the Deacon, 129–30, and an anonymous treatise on the Four Rivers of Paradise (PG 106, cols. 1056–57). This text, which is transmitted along with most copies of the *Synopsis major Basilicorum*, a mid 10th-century compilation, is redolent of the encyclopedism of Constantine Porphyrogenetos, on which see Lemerle, *Premier humanisme*, chap. 10.

⁶¹ The emperor's duty to recover lost territory is clearly stated in *Epanagoge*, 2.2; cf. H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'empire*

Second, a representation of the Four Rivers of Paradise was a *typos* of Paradise itself, both earthly and heavenly. It proclaimed that the emperor had created a paradise for his subjects on earth, both in the *oikoumene* as a whole and in the microcosm of the bath—this is surely the point of the insistence on its delightfulness. It also proclaimed that he led them toward the “New Eden” that Christ and those who imitated him regained for Man in heaven. This theme figures prominently in Leo's funeral oration for his father, Basil I,⁶² and in this connection it is worth noting that the *Vita Basilii* refers to the Nea Ekklesia as a “New Eden.”⁶³

Admittedly, within the context of Paradise iconography, the function of the imperial portrait appears rather ambiguous. Since the emperor was shown holding a sword, and since doors—either real or depicted, or both—are an important feature of the scene evoked in the poem, one could infer that he was being portrayed in the role of the angel with the flaming sword at the gate of Paradise (Gen. 3:25). In other respects, however, it makes more sense to regard the imperial portraits as the images of the archetypal Man who was created in the image and likeness of God to rule over the rest of creation. The presence of the animal, bird, and tree images would seem to indicate this line of thought. Together with the aquatic cycle, they represent the full range of creatures over which the first man was given dominion. In patristic exegesis of the Creation story (Hexameron), this dominion is interpreted as the archetype of monarchy, the institution on earth of the heavenly order of being.⁶⁴ It is also presented as representative of the soul's mastery over the body and its “bestial” passions.⁶⁵ Both ideas were clearly suited to Christian imperial ideology and were implicit in a common *topos* of imperial panegyric, which compared the emperor's enemies to wild beasts that he slays or, better, tames in a Christ / Orpheus-like

byzantin (Paris, 1975), 42. The Photian Synod of 879–80 expressed, in its concluding address to Basil I, the wish that ἀποδώῃ Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν τὰ ἀρχαῖα ὄρια τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἐξουσίας τῇ σῇ κραταίᾳ καὶ εἰρηνοποιῶ βασιλείᾳ: Mansi, XVII, 520.

⁶² Vogt-Hausherr, *Oraison funèbre*, 66–72. Whatever doubts Leo and others may have had about his parentage, for official purposes he considered Basil I, not Michael III, to be his father: E. Kislinger, “Eudokia Ingerina, Basileios I. und Michael III.,” *JÖB* 33 (1983), 119–36.

⁶³ Theoph. Cont., 329; the expression is also used in the *ekphrasis* by John Geometres (ed. Cramer, 277, line 4).

⁶⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, PG 44, col. 136 ff.

⁶⁵ St. Basil, *On the Origin of Man*, §19: ed. A. Smets and M. van Esbroeck (Paris, 1970), 216 ff.

manner, by virtue of the self-control that he exercises over his carnal appetites.⁶⁶ That the entire program was conceived as a *typos* of divinely instituted monarchy is further suggested by the image of the chorus of praise, with its Old Testament echoes and its consequent implication that just as all created things praise their Maker, so the creations of the emperor's wisdom praise him as the *typos* of redeemed Man and his Redeemer, the Divine Monarch.

However, the possibility that the imperial image was meant to symbolize the angel with the flaming sword should not be dismissed, especially since the question of whether the program occupied one room or two still remains open.

Besides, the explanation of the animal representations offered so far is inadequate, because it fails to explain the specific choice and symbolism of the beings depicted, and thus does not entirely dispel the suspicion that the figures may have been no more than ornamental or, at best, heraldic motifs. For stylized depictions of animals, notably lions and griffins, occur in sculptures, ivories, and textiles of the Middle Byzantine period with a regularity that suggests that they belonged to a pattern book of standard, if symbolic, designs, whose significance was devalued by constant reproduction. We must now, therefore, address ourselves to the question of the individual and collective symbolism of the songbird, lion, snake, crane, tree, and griffin, which were represented, in some form or other, in the main bath chamber. In doing so, however, we must note that, although we are treating the representations as a group, some were clearly more closely associated than others. Thus the mentions of the songbird and the griffin are separated by a whole strophe in each case from the description of the other four figures, which are listed in quick succession. The songbird and griffin stand apart in other ways: the former, "at the master's feet," is the only figure that is specifically located in the composition, while the latter is the only one not involved in the hymn of praise.

The problem, essentially, is to find an interpre-

tation that fits all the representations and does not isolate or exclude one or more of them. In this, there are obvious limitations to some of the hypotheses that follow from the argument so far. Thus the idea that the figures represent "bestial" enemies that the emperor has conquered applies admirably to the lion and the snake, both of which are mentioned in a verse of the psalms (Ps. 90:13) that readily came to mind in the context of imperial triumph.⁶⁷ However, neither the birds nor the griffin seem particularly relevant to this theme, to which bears and wolves would have been more appropriate. The same consideration would apply to the notion that the symbols were apotropaic.⁶⁸ The theory that the figures symbolize Paradise before the Fall, or Paradise Regained, is easier to sustain: fish, plants, creeping things, birds, and four-footed beasts are all represented in the composition, which also includes the essential ingredients of the Genesis story, the Serpent and the Tree. An interpretation along these lines is certainly acceptable. But it is not the whole explanation, since it applies essentially to the four central figures, and does not explain the presence of an extra bird or a mythical beast which only receives one mention in Hexameron literature.⁶⁹ Moreover, it is difficult to see why the crane, a bird that does not figure very prominently in Hexameron literature or in the *Physiologus*, should have been chosen to represent the fowls of the air.⁷⁰

The only comprehensive explanation is surely that the figures all symbolize Leo's special attributes and concerns. The songbird—presumably a nightingale or a turtledove⁷¹—can plausibly be

⁶⁷ Ἐπὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ βασιλικὸν ἐπέβης, καὶ κατεπάτησας λέοντα καὶ δράκοντα. Cf. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883; several rpr.), I, 375; Arethas, *Scripta minora*, II, 9, 33. For representations in art of Christ trampling on lion and serpent, see Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, 237–39; Th. M. Probatas, 'Ο διάβολος εἰς τὴν βυζαντινὴν τέχνην (Thessaloniki, 1980), 234–37.

⁶⁸ A. Grabar, "Amulettes byzantines du Moyen Âge," *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974), 534 note 2 (rpr. in *L'art paléochrétien et l'art byzantin*). For the animals and birds represented in amulets of an earlier period, see K. M. D. Dunbabin and M. W. Dickie, "Invidia rumpuntur pectora: The Iconography of Phthonos / Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art," *JbAC* 26 (1983), 7–37.

⁶⁹ George of Pisidia, PG 92, col. 1505, line 933.

⁷⁰ J. Strzygowski, *Der Bilderkreis des griechischen Physiologus* (Leipzig, 1899); text ed. F. Sbordone, *Physiologus* (Milan, 1936).

⁷¹ The nightingale (ἀηδών) was by definition the songbird par excellence; on the other hand, the participle τρυζών (line 66) is suggestive of the turtledove (τρουγών), which would be appropriate to the biblical inspiration and to the spring ceremonial context for which we are arguing (above, p. 99; below, p. 112); cf. Cant. 2:12: Τὰ ἀνθή ὠφθη ἐν τῇ γῇ, καιρὸς τῆς τομῆς ἐφθάκε, φωνὴ τῆς τρυγόνος ἠκούσθη ἐν τῇ γῇ ἡμῶν. See too *Physiologus*,

⁶⁶ George of Pisidia, ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia poem, I: Panegirici epici* (Ettal, 1959), in *Heracium*, lines 14 ff; *Expedition persica*, II, lines 163 ff; III, 409–10; *Bellum avaricum*, lines 101 ff; J. Darrouzès and L. Westerink, *Théodore Daphnopolites: Correspondance* (Paris, 1978), 153; Arethas, *Scripta minora*, ed. L. Westerink, II (Leipzig, 1972), 5–6. See also the *ekphrasis* by John Geometres, ed. Cramer, 278, lines 5 ff. On Orpheus as a *typos* of Christ, see Sr. Charles Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife: A Study of the Transmutation of Some Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Funerary Art*, BAR, International Series 100 (Oxford, 1981), chap. 2.

seen as a symbol of the rhetorical eloquence practiced by the emperor and the learned rhetors who perform at his feet: note the ambiguous expression τεχνικῶν λογίων in the following *koukoulion* which, in its genitive form, can mean both the words (λόγια) of the art of rhetoric and the practitioners (λόγιοι) of that art, with which and with whom Leo has surrounded himself. The lion (λέων) is unmistakably Leo's own personal emblem, as well as a symbol of the indispensable virtue of Fortitude (ἀνδρεία). The snake is explicitly identified as a symbol of wisdom.⁷² The tree was a potent Christian symbol, signifying not only the Tree in the Garden of Eden but also the Rod of Moses, which struck the rock and produced water in the desert, and the Cross by which the Fall was redeemed.⁷³ It was thus both the Tree of Knowledge (or Wisdom) and the Tree of Life.⁷⁴ As such, it alluded not only to the emperor's wisdom and generative power but also, probably, to the empress through a play on her name.⁷⁵ Beautiful young women were conventionally compared to trees,⁷⁶ as in our poem, where, moreover, the adjective used of the tree (τανύεργος) echoes the noun (ἔργος) used of the empress. And there is yet another sense in which the image of the tree had particular significance for Leo VI. Among the signs that, in the propaganda of the Macedonian dynasty, foretold Basil I's rise to power, was the apparition to his mother of a great tree which grew from her and stood in her courtyard. According to

the *Vita Basilii*, this tree, which resembled a cypress, had a gold trunk, golden branches, and golden leaves.⁷⁷

The remaining figure in the central group, that of the crane, is not so readily explicable in terms of conventional or popular symbolism. However, if we look at what the zoological treatises available to educated Byzantines had to say about the habits of this bird, it does not appear out of place among a group of symbols chosen for their relevance to Leo VI.⁷⁸ Aristotle and his excerptors drew attention to cranes' orderly social organization and monarchical constitution.⁷⁹ Aelian noted the exemplary discipline that they observe in their seasonal migration and the sleepless vigilance of the sentries posted to keep watch while a migrating flock is at rest.⁸⁰ According to the paraphrase of Dionysius' *Ixeuticon*, "most wise are the counsels of the screaming cranes. . . they fly in formation like men advancing into battle."⁸¹ Such creatures must have held some interest for a "wise" emperor who composed a treatise on military tactics.⁸² Equally pertinent to Leo, with his reputation as a stargazer, was the symbolism of the crane explained in the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo: "when they want to indicate a man who knows the heavens, they depict a flying crane."⁸³

We come now to the awe-inspiring, fire-

chap. 28, ed. Sbordone, 92 ff, where the turtledove is characterized as a model of chastity and monogamy(!).

⁷² On good Christian authority: in Genesis the snake is characterized as the "most subtle" (φρονιμώτατος) of the animals in the Garden, and in their commentaries on this passage, both St. John Chrysostom and St. John Damascene stress the serpent's intimacy with Adam and Eve before the Fall: PG 53, col. 127; 94, col. 909.

⁷³ The whole complex of ideas is conveniently summarized by Leo VI in his homily on the Elevation of the Cross: Hieromonk Akakios, Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ πανηγυρικοὶ λόγοι (Athens, 1868), 118–24. Underwood, "The Fountain of Life," is also fundamental. For use of the tree image in 6th-century imperial panegyric, see Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, ed. Averil Cameron (London, 1976), 86, 123–24. Note that both the Cross and the Rod of Moses were relics kept in the imperial palace and closely associated with the memory of Constantine the Great; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee* (Darmstadt, 1956), 131 ff.

⁷⁴ Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2; cf. Arethas, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, PG 106, col. 780: ἔσλον δὲ ζωῆς, τὴν ἐνθεὸν φησι σοφίαν.

⁷⁵ See above, note 13 and p. 106.

⁷⁶ E.g., *Achmes Oneirocriticon*, ed. F. Drexler (Leipzig, 1925), 108; W. Hörandner, *Theodoros Prodromos, historische Gedichte* (Vienna, 1974), no. 39, lines 54–55 (p. 384); Basil Achridenos, ed. W. Regel, *Fontes rerum byzantinorum* (St. Petersburg, 1892, 1917; rpr. Leipzig, 1982), 313.

⁷⁷ Theoph. Cont., 221–22, 225–26; Genesios, *Regum libri quattuor*, ed. A. Lesmüller-Werner and J. Thurn (Berlin-New York, 1978), 77. See also Gy. Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I.," *DOP* 15 (1961), 88–90, 95–96.

⁷⁸ For ancient lore about cranes, see in general *RE* 11, 1521–28.

⁷⁹ *Hist. an.*, I, 1; Sp. P. Lampros, *Excerptorum Constantini de natura animalium libri duo* (Berlin, 1885), 5.

⁸⁰ *De nat. an.*, III, 13. For knowledge of Aelian in this period, cf. Photios, *Epistulae et Amphilochia*, II, ed. L. Westerink (Leipzig, 1984), no. 278, p. 229. For *agrypnia* as an imperial virtue, see, e.g., *ibid.*, no. 248, p. 184; Theoph. Cont., 271.

⁸¹ *Dionysii Ixeuticon seu de aucupio libri tres*, ed. A. Garzya (Leipzig, 1963), chap. 18, pp. 34–35. In the context of our argument, it is also relevant to quote the opening lines of the preface to the paraphrase, dedicating this to an unnamed emperor: Ἐπειδὴ σοι τῆς γῆς ἀπάσης ἔχοντι καὶ τοῦ πελάγους τοὺς οἰάκας σοφῶ τε εἶναι καὶ φιλομαθεῖ δέδωκεν εὖ ποιῶν ὁ Θεός (p. 1). There can be no doubt that the work was known to Leo VI and his circle. It was a practical manual, and a copy of it was bound along with a basic medical textbook, Dioscorides' *Herbal*, in a deluxe manuscript, the famous Vind. med. gr. 1, which had been in Constantinople since the early 6th century and by this time almost certainly belonged to the imperial library. On illustrations to the text, see. Z. Kadar, *Survivals of Greek Zoological Illuminations in Byzantine Manuscripts* (Budapest, 1978), 77 ff.

⁸² PG 107, cols. 672 ff; A. Dain and J. A. de Foucault, "Les stratèges byzantins," *TM* 2 (1967), 354–57. Cf. Grosdidier de Matons, "Trois études," 229 ff.

⁸³ Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, ed. F. Sbordone (Naples, 1940), §94, p. 201. For Leo's interest in astronomy and astrology, see below, note 87.

breathing griffin. This mythical creature, half bird, half beast, was an ancient symbol of light and fire, associated with Apollo and Helios.⁸⁴ As such, it signified both Nemesis and Apotheosis, and in this latter sense was depicted as a psychopomp in ancient funerary representations of the deceased's *consecratio*.⁸⁵ Its continuing significance in medieval Byzantium as a symbol of elevation from earth to heaven is demonstrated by the fact that Middle Byzantine representations of the heavenly ascent of Alexander the Great portray the king in the ceremonial costume of a Byzantine emperor in a chariot drawn by griffins.⁸⁶ These considerations alone make it plausible that the griffin was depicted in Leo's bath in order to proclaim the emperor's divine elevation above other mortals and his privileged communication with the heavenly sphere—a theme that is, indeed, stated in the *koukoulion* immediately preceding the description of the griffin, in a pointed allusion to Leo's astronomical and astrological expertise.⁸⁷ The argument becomes more compelling when it is remembered that Leo VI, like his father, had a special reverence for the Prophet Elias, who had played an important part in Basil's "providential" rise to power, and on whose feast day Leo was restored to favor with his father after the disgrace and imprisonment that he had suffered through the "frame-up" engineered by Theodore Santabarenos.⁸⁸ Elias had long been assimilated to Helios, partly because of the similarity of the names, and partly because he had been taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire patently reminiscent of the sun's quadriga.⁸⁹ He was thus not only a symbol of prophecy, zeal, and

asceticism, but also a convenient Christian substitute for traditional pagan images of the sun, light, fire, and apotheosis. I therefore suggest that the griffin in Leo's bath was a cryptic allusion to the Prophet Elias. If this seems farfetched, account should be taken of two pieces of evidence for the way in which "Macedonian" propaganda understood Basil's relationship with the prophet. One is Zonaras' comment that Basil I "raised a church to the Prophet Elias the Tishbite, for he especially venerated him, and believed that he would be taken by him and raised up with him in the fiery chariot."⁹⁰ The other is the account, in Genesios and the *Vita Basilii*, of the dream in which the Prophet Elias prophesied to Basil's mother that her son would become emperor: he appeared to her as an old man, "out of whose mouth fire issued."⁹¹ Besides, the exhalation—or utterance—of divine flame evoked another Christian image that had a special significance for Leo VI: the "tongues" of fire that accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost, whose theological meaning Leo had expounded at length in two of his homilies.⁹² And this brief discussion by no means exhausts the question of the griffin's religious symbolism.⁹³

Seen in this light, the representations of the griffin and the other figures appear as much more than pattern-book motifs or vaguely significant symbols. Indeed, the particular aptness of their symbolism to Leo suggests that he may have established, rather than followed, the fashion for reproducing them.

We are now in a position to answer the question from which this discussion started: was the figural decoration in the interior of Leo's bath purely decorative? The answer is, surely not. Each of the rep-

⁸⁴E. Simon, "Zur Bedeutung des Greifen in der Kunst der Kaiserzeit," *Latomus* 21 (1962), 749–80; I. Flagge, *Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung des Greifen* (Sankt Augustin, 1975).

⁸⁵J. Engemann, "Der Greif als Apotheosetier," *JbAC* 25 (1982), 172–76.

⁸⁶H. P. L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo, 1953), 118 ff.; A. K. Orlandos, *Νέον ανάγλυφον τῆς ἀναλήψεως τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου*, *Ἐπιστ. Ἐπ. Φιλ. Σχ. Ἀθ.*, 2nd ser., 5 (1954–55), 281–89.

⁸⁷*Ἀτροπα* (line 86) is of course reminiscent of Atropos, one of the three Fates. The expertise in question, a significant feature of the posthumous legend of Leo the Wise, has been played down by Mango in his classic study ("The Legend of Leo the Wise," *ZR* 6 [1960], 59–93, rpr. in *Byzantium and Its Image*). However, the sources that he quotes all indicate the basis of a reputation which could easily be exaggerated in panegyric and legend.

⁸⁸Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden," 90–91; Theoph. Cont., 349–51; *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 114–18 (Vogt, I, 105–9); N. Oikonomides, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (Paris, 1972), 215–19; Arethas, *Scripta minora*, II, 28, 43 ff.; Akakios, *Λέοντος τοῦ Σοφοῦ*, 89, 259 ff.

⁸⁹*DACL* 4.2, 2670 ff.; *Lexicon der christlichen Ikonographie*, I, 607 ff.

⁹⁰Zonaras (Bonn ed.), III, 432.

⁹¹Theoph. Cont., 222; Genesios, ed. Lesmüller-Werner and Thurn, 77.

⁹²Akakios, 21–47.

⁹³See C. Hardie, "The Symbol of the Gryphon in *Purgatorio*, xxix.108 and Following Cantos," *Centenary Essays on Dante by Members of the Oxford Dante Society* (Oxford, 1965), 103–31; see also the passage in a version of the *Physiologus* (ed. Sbordone, 183), which says that two griffins are associated with the sun to protect mankind from its heat, and then adds the following allegorical interpretation: Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν θεότητα δύο γρόπες συμπορεύονται, τουτέστιν ὁ ἀρχάγγελος Μιχαὴλ καὶ ἡ ἁγία Θεοτόκος, καὶ δέχονται τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου φλέξεις, τουτέστι τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ θυμὸν, ἵνα μὴ τοῖς πᾶσιν ἔρει, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς, καὶ κατακαύσει ὁ θυμὸς αὐτοῦ. It might be profitable to consider the figures of the Virgin and the Archangel Michael in the narthex mosaic of Hagia Sophia in the light of this passage. For the latest interpretation of this enigmatic panel, and full bibliography, see Schminck, "Rota tu volubilis," 219 ff.

representations can be read, mostly in more than one sense, as a statement about imperial power, and the power of one particular emperor. It is, above all, the peculiar relevance of the iconography to Leo VI which shows that the representations were chosen with great care for their symbolic meaning. Moreover, they have a clear unifying theme: they all add up to an elaborate celebration of the emperor's wisdom. This is consistent not only with the point labored in the *koukoulia* of our poem, but also with the evidence of other contemporary and slightly later texts, which shows beyond doubt that Leo was already celebrated in his own day, and not just in posthumous legend, as a ruler of outstanding *sophia*.⁹⁴

As to the further question of what the composition looked like, it is still not possible to propose a definitive solution. But now that we have established that the figural decoration was meant to be read as a coherent whole, we have added considerable weight to the argument that the representations were all in close proximity. The case for visualizing the whole program as a single mosaic composition in the dome of the building thus becomes extremely compelling. Once it is accepted, certain patterns begin to suggest themselves. The hierarchy of elements can be taken to indicate a vertical—and concentric—progression from the aquatic cycle, depicted around the rim of the dome, to the fiery griffin at the top and in the center. Further, the presence of four river gods and a central foursome of living creatures would seem to suggest a certain correlation between the two groups, with the river gods in a lower and the other figures in a higher zone. It seems improbable that an opportunity would have been missed to make the most of the symbolic properties of the number four.⁹⁵

It is true that as long as the problem of the doors and their possible implications remains unsolved other possibilities remain open. However, the problem does not preclude the interpretation advanced here: in fact, it can be solved most neatly by postulating the depiction of a pair of doors,

symbolic of the gates of Paradise, underneath the imperial portraits. There is clearly a parallel between the doors and the flow of countless waters, both singing the emperor's praise. Since there were waters both depicted in the mosaic and physically present in the bath, the same can be suggested for the doors. Furthermore, it must be recalled that both the description and what it describes were probably related to the content of the metrical inscriptions. We have already noted a likely allusion to Psalm 148 in the image of the cosmic chorus of praise. The mention of the doors is evocative of Psalm 23 (24):7,⁹⁶ and that of the waters of several passages in the psalter (Pss. 41:7, 92:3–4, 97:8, 106:33). From the concordance of these echoes it is legitimate to infer that the "metrical encomia" inscribed near the river gods were, or contained, quotations from the psalms. Given the use that was made of such quotations in imperial panegyric,⁹⁷ and given the importance of David in the propaganda image of the Macedonian emperors,⁹⁸ this inference has much to recommend it.

The preceding discussion does not claim to be exhaustive, and it will have fulfilled its purpose if it provides the key for further elucidation of particular textual and iconographic details. Yet the key will not work until one further aspect of the iconography has been clarified. This is the actual portrayal of the imperial couple: why does the emperor hold a sword, and why does the empress scatter petals? Their respective attributes can be explained in terms of a division of imperial labor into male and female roles: the emperor is all manly power, while the empress is all fertility and floral abundance. However, this may not be all. Imperial art was inseparable from imperial ceremonial, and depicted emperors in ceremonial attitudes and ceremonial attire. Palace buildings were built for ceremonial occasions, and the mosaics decorating their walls and ceilings were appropriate to the ceremonies acted out below. What is more, new buildings involved new ceremonies or

⁹⁴In addition to the sources cited by J. Irmscher, "Die Gestalt Leons VI. des Weisen in Volkssage und Historiographie," *Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte im 9.–11. Jahrhundert*, ed. V. Vavřínek (Prague, 1978), 212–13, see Arethas, *Scripta minora*, II, 24–25, 46–47; *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. L. Westerink (Washington, D.C., 1981), 56; Kolias, *Leon Choerosphactes*, 105.

⁹⁵G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951; rpr. 1971), I, 155–56, 159 ff, 196 ff.

⁹⁶Ἀρατε πύλας οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάρθητε πύλαι αἰώνιοι, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. Cf. Appendix 1, note 153.

⁹⁷See, e.g., Theodore Prodromos, ed. Hörandner, IV.51–52, XI.147–60.

⁹⁸Theoph. Cont., 335; Photios in PG 102, cols. 582, 584. See also the verse encomium to Basil I published by A. Brinkmann in *Alexandri Lycopolitani contra Manichaei opiniones disputatio* (Leipzig, 1895), xvii. Cf. Moravcsik, "Sagen und Legenden," 69; H. Buchthal, "The Exaltation of David," *JWarb* 37 (1974), 330–33.

the rearrangement of old ones. We must, therefore, consider the possibility that the imperial portraits in Leo's bath had a ceremonial significance.

The contextual themes of water, fire and light, purification and enlightenment, and the allusions to Elias and the Fiery Furnace, would seem to suggest a connection with either Epiphany or Pentecost. Unfortunately, however, the *De cerimoniis* of Constantine Porphyrogennetos provides no corroborative evidence, for these or other occasions.

There is, nevertheless, some evidence for the ritual performance of the gestures in question. First, the emperor and his sword. The Late Byzantine historian Pachymeres records how Tartar envoys who visited the court of the emperor of Nicaea, Theodore II Laskaris (1254–58), were treated to a performance of the *prokypsis* ceremony, in which a curtain was drawn aside to reveal the emperor in all his majesty, “holding a sword in his hands.”⁹⁹ The imperial sword also figures in the fourteenth-century description by Pseudo-Kodinos of the *prokypsis* ritual at Christmas and Epiphany.¹⁰⁰ The *prokypsis* ceremony can be traced back to the mid twelfth century at the earliest.¹⁰¹ However, it may well have had antecedents among the ceremonies described by Constantine Porphyrogennetos. Its emergence has plausibly been linked to the decline of the ceremonial appearance and acclamation of the emperor in the Hippodrome, and to the need to transfer the essentials of this ceremonial to the Blachernae Palace, the favorite (though by no means exclusive) residence of the Comnenian emperors.¹⁰² But the ritual as described by Pseudo-Kodinos had certain features in common with another ancient ceremony, that of the Brumalia. This also took place in a courtyard; the emperor appeared on a tribune or balcony (πρόκυμμα) with a curtain (παρακλυτικόν); there were candles, music, and chants composed specially for the occa-

sion.¹⁰³ It is thus a reasonable guess that the emperor held a sword during this ceremony, which, being of pagan origin, was certainly one of the most secular in the court calendar, and therefore well suited to a display of the emperor's *worldly* power.¹⁰⁴ As we have seen, the anacreontic verse form of our poem was used for Brumalia songs in the Macedonian period,¹⁰⁵ and, as we shall see shortly, there was a certain parallel between the fate of the Brumalia ceremony and the fate of Leo's bath. It is worth noting, too, that the emperor's and empress' Brumalia were above all celebrations of their *names*.¹⁰⁶ As we have seen, the names Leo and Zoe were symbolized in the depictions of the lion and the tree.

As for the scattering of petals, it may be of relevance that during the Brumalia the empress distributed scarlet cloth to the wives of court officials.¹⁰⁷ This does not mean, however, that the gesture cannot also be interpreted more literally. A clue as to its ritual significance may perhaps be found in a letter of Michael Psellos to Patriarch Michael Keroularios.¹⁰⁸ Psellos thanks the patriarch for a gift of fish,¹⁰⁹ and describes how he will take a luxurious bath while the fish is being prepared. “First, when I arrive at the bath, I shall contemplate its delightfulness and beauty, its basins and rich streams. Then, having stripped a whole rose bush and separated the petals from the stalks, and the flowers from the leaves, I shall strew them on the waters, making the surface white or crimson. And when I have washed my body thoroughly, I shall enter the pool and swim with pleasure, turning over in my mind that the river hog, the finest of fish, is being prepared by culinary arts.” The association of strewn petals, luxurious bathing, and a fish meal is uncannily reminiscent of our poem. Psellos is describing a sensual experience. But he is also describing a *ritual* experience: the symbolic

⁹⁹ Pachymeres (Bonn ed.), I, 136; ed. A. Failler and trans. V. Laurent, *Relations historiques* (Paris, 1984), I, 189.

¹⁰⁰ Ed. Verpeaux, 202. The best discussion of the ceremony is still that by A. Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit*, SBMünch, phil.-hist.Kl. (Munich, 1920), 85–97.

¹⁰¹ Its existence can perhaps be inferred from allusions in certain pieces of political verse dating from the early 1150s, one of which is explicitly associated with the opening of a new palace building of the emperor Manuel I, probably at the Blachernae: S. Bernardinello, *Theodori Prodromi de Manganis* (Padua, 1972), no. 3, esp. line 78. The earliest description of the ceremony is by Niketas Choniates (ed. Van Dieten, 477–78), and the “vulgar paraphrase” of this passage contains what may be the earliest use of the word; but cf. P. Magdalino and R. Nelson, “The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century,” *BF* 8 (1982), 166 note 113.

¹⁰² Heisenberg, *op. cit.*

¹⁰³ *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 600. Note too that the 12th-century verse text referred to above (note 101) refers to the occasion it celebrates as χαῖας ἡμέρα κοσμηκῆς, ἡμέρα βρουμαλίου (line 78).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. note 47 above.

¹⁰⁵ Above, pp. 98 f and note 11. The works in question, by Arethas and Leo the Mathematician, are known only from the *pinax* of the Barberinianus manuscript (see *Spicilegium romanum*, IV, xxxvii).

¹⁰⁶ Koukoules, Βυζαντινῶν βίος και πολιτισμός, II.1, 27.

¹⁰⁷ Theoph. Cont., 147.

¹⁰⁸ *Opera minora*, ed. Kurtz and Drexel, II, 241–42; Berger, *Das Bad*, 58.

¹⁰⁹ A common theme in Byzantine epistolography, reflecting not only the desirability but also the symbolism of fish as a food: cf. Nikephoros Blemmydes, ed. N. Festa, in *Theodori Ducae Lascaris epistulae CCXVII* (Florence, 1898), 302–3.

prelude to a symbolic meal, provided by the high priest of Christ's Church. It may be, therefore, that his rose petals were not just an extravagant personal refinement, but should rather be seen as a necessary accoutrement of ritual bathing among the palace elite. Two occasions described in the *De cerimoniis* involved a ritual bath. One was religious, the emperor's visit to the ἄγιον λούμα at the Blachernae.¹¹⁰ The other was the coronation and wedding of an augusta, who, on the third day of the festivities, went in solemn procession to one of the palace baths.¹¹¹ If we are looking for a ceremonial context for the representation of the empress in Leo's bath, this nuptial occasion surely deserves attention, especially since our poem is associated with two others by the same author celebrating an imperial wedding.

Before leaving this question, however, one final point remains to be considered: the poem's insistence on the rosy complexion worn by the emperor as well as the empress. Was this simply a flattering reference to youth and health, or did it have deeper significance? We have already had occasion to mention the late spring / early summer equivalent of the Brumalia, the Rosalia or Rose Festival, which has a continuous history in rural Greece from ancient to modern times.¹¹² There is no evidence that the Rosalia was officially celebrated in medieval Constantinople, and its unofficial celebration in the provinces was strongly discouraged by the Church.¹¹³ However, the sixth-century rhetorical tradition with which it was associated, in prose pieces by Procopius of Gaza and his pupil John,¹¹⁴ may have made it fairly respectable in the eyes of an emperor with strong literary, ceremonial, and antiquarian interests. In this connection it is useful to recall that Leo's successor, his brother Alexander (912–913), was accused of celebrating

the pagan Feast of Flowers (Ἀνθεστήρια) and sacrificing to the statues in the Hippodrome.¹¹⁵ Like so many pieces of *psogos* in Byzantine literature, this information probably distorts a fact for which there was a perfectly traditional and perhaps innocent explanation; Alexander may have been imitating his predecessor more closely than it suited his detractors to admit.

The Rosalia, moreover, fell at an important time of year in the court ceremonial calendar, when winter and the Great Fast were over and festivities to celebrate cosmic rejuvenation were very much in order.¹¹⁶ They included not only the feasts of the Paschal cycle—Easter, Mid-Pentecost (when Leo “miraculously” survived an attempt on his life in 902 or 903),¹¹⁷ Ascension, and Pentecost—and the celebrations in honor of the birthday of Constantinople (11 May), on which occasion, as on Ascension Day, the leaders of the demes presented the emperor with crosses made of roses (ῥοδόπλοκοι σταυροί).¹¹⁸ Also commemorated in this season were two anniversaries of very recent institution: that of the encaenia of the Nea Ekklesia (1 May 880)¹¹⁹ and that of the encaenia of the monastery church of St. Lazaros (4 May 899 or 900).¹²⁰ The Nea and St. Lazaros were the most important religious foundations of Basil I and Leo VI respectively, and constituted, in a sense, the poles of the new Macedonian extension to the Great Palace. It is surely no coincidence that their encaenia were

¹¹⁵Theoph. Cont., 873 (Cont. Geo. Mon.); Arethas, *Scripta minora*, I, 91; cf. P. Karlin-Hayter, “The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name,” *Speculum* 44 (1969), 589–90, rpr. in eadem, *Studies in Byzantine Political History* (London, 1981). There is a grain of plausibility in the statement that Alexander used church chandeliers and hangings; for their use in imperial receptions, cf. *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 572–73, 580–81.

¹¹⁶The Rosalia occurred “after Easter” according to Balsamon, and “in the week after Pentecost” according to Chomatenos. The discrepancy in these statements probably reflects variation in local practice, as in modern times; see the secondary literature cited above, note 112, especially Koukoules and Puchner.

¹¹⁷On the sources for the episode, see Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii*, 14–16, and, for the ceremonies, *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 53–54, 98–108 (Vogt, I, 48–49, 92 ff.). The attempt took place in the church of St. Mokios (Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, 354 ff.). Presumably this was chosen as the venue for the Mid-Pentecost procession because the date usually fell close to St. Mokios' day (11 May), which also happened to be the birthday of Constantinople (see next note); there was thus an implicit connection between the two events.

¹¹⁸*De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 110–11, 344 (Vogt, I, 103; II, 143).

¹¹⁹Theoph. Cont., 692 (Ps.-Sym.); *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 118–21 (Vogt, I, 110–12); Oikonomidès, *Listes de préséance*, 214–15.

¹²⁰See R. J. H. Jenkins, B. Laourdas, and C. Mango, “Nine Orations of Arethas from Cod. Marc. Gr. 524,” *BZ* 47 (1954), 5 ff (rpr. in R. J. H. Jenkins, *Studies on Byzantine History of the 9th and 10th Centuries* [London, 1970]).

¹¹⁰*De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 551–56; Berger, *Das Bad*, 81.

¹¹¹*De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 214–16 (Vogt, II, 22; cf. also *Commentaire*, II, 40–41). The bath was not necessarily at the Magnaura, as Berger (op. cit., 59) assumes.

¹¹²W. Tomaschek, “Über Brumalia und Rosalia,” *SBWien*, phil.-hist. Kl. 60 (Vienna, 1968), 369–71; Koukoules, II.1, 29–31; W. Puchner, “Die ‘Rogatsiensgesellschaften,’” *SOForsch* 36 (1977), 144 ff. The floral aspect of spring is now celebrated mainly on May Day (Πρωτομαιά); see G. F. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore* (Cambridge, 1903), 40–42, 46 ff; G. A. Megas, *Greek Calendar Customs*, 3rd ed. (Athens, 1982), 116 ff.

¹¹³Theodore Balsamon, Commentary on canon 62 of the Council in Trullo, ed. Rhalles and Potles, Σύνταγμα, II, 450; Demetrios Chomatenos, ed. J. B. Pitra, *Analecta spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, VI (Paris, 1891; rpr. 1967), 509 ff.

¹¹⁴A. Garzya and R. Loenertz, *Procopii Gazaei epistolae et declamationes* (Ettal, 1963), 83 ff; Matrangola, *Anecdota graeca*, II, 635 ff.

held in the season of renewal, in a way that associated the Macedonian *renovatio* with the Resurrection of Christ, the gift of Divine Wisdom through the Holy Spirit, and the foundation of Constantinople by Constantine the Great, not to mention the feast of that sainted emperor and his mother, St. Helena, on 21 May.¹²¹

Leo's bath cannot be understood in isolation from these buildings. Church and bath were not antithetical institutions; on the contrary, from the sixth century they were increasingly inseparable.¹²² The closest architectural parallels we have been able to find are church buildings. Leo's bath, standing as it did near the Tzykanisterion, beside the Oikonomeion of the Nea and roughly equidistant from the Nea and St. Lazaros, was in a sense the link between them and the pivot of the axis that they formed. It was thus the secular aspect of the renewal that they embodied, proclaiming itself as such through its antique appearance, which caused it to be mistaken for a Constantinian foundation. It is, therefore, an intriguing possibility that its opening ceremony was held in early May and contained deliberate echoes of the Rosalia, the secular festival of annual renewal.

There is much that is conjectural in the argument presented above. However, at almost every stage, it has been possible to fit the salient features of Leo's bath, as they emerge from the anacreontic *ekphrasis* by Leo Choirosphaktes, into a firm historical and cultural context: that of the image of imperial renewal built up by Basil I, Leo VI, and Constantine VII around their dynastic regime. The picture that results, therefore, has some claim to credibility because it shows a phenomenon generally consistent with the norms of Christian imperial orthodoxy as expressed in official literature of the time, and as adapted to the particular requirements of Leo VI. Above all, the iconography

of the bath's interior no longer appears in a profane, eccentric light, but imbued with all the religious significance that we have come to expect of imperial art of this period.

However, consistency with a general framework of belief does not necessarily preclude tensions and contradictions with other elements inside that framework. There are various reasons for thinking that Leo's bath and its decoration might have been regarded as daring or controversial. First, its ornamental use of ancient sculptures and statues was unusual, if not entirely unique, in the Middle Byzantine period. Characteristically, the only other post-iconoclastic emperor who displayed statues so prominently in the palace was Leo's son Constantine VII.¹²³ Second, the figural decoration of the interior is unique among surviving and attested imperial works of art, not only in its subject matter but also in its allegorical mode of treatment. Apart from the emperor and empress, all the other figures in the composition are symbols, and the composition as a whole cannot be taken at face value as an *actual* scene. It was, in other words, a *σκιὰ καὶ τύπος*, a shadow outline, and not a real likeness (*εἰκών*). In this it ran counter to the direction in which Byzantine representational art had long been moving, and in which a decisive turning point had been marked by the eighty-second canon of the Council in Trullo (692) forbidding the depiction of Christ in the form of a lamb.¹²⁴ Third, while the symbolism of the iconography was undoubtedly religious, it was not particularly pious. It did not show the emperor in an attitude of humble prayer, receiving his power by divine grace through his *pietas*; rather, it showed him as ruler of the cosmos, lord of paradise regained, and the source of all wisdom, elevated to the heavenly sphere by his personal relationship with the divine light. Finally, if what we have said about the ceremonial context of the building is correct, Leo's bath presented itself, if not as an alternative to, at least as a partner of, the imperial churches with which it was associated.

All in all, therefore, the monument corresponded to—indeed, epitomized—those aspects of the “Macedonian Renaissance” that have been shown to be untypical of Byzantine culture outside the hothouse atmosphere of the court,¹²⁵ although

¹²¹ On the cult of Constantine under Basil I and Leo VI, see Schminck, “‘Rota tu volubilis,’” 217, 232. Basil founded a church dedicated to Constantine, and so did Leo's first wife Theophano: Janin, *Eglises et monastères*, 295–96. Both Basil and Leo gave the name Constantine to their intended heirs, thus following the practice of the Heraclian and Isaurian dynasties. Both emperors also were buried in the Mausoleum of Constantine, and, in the ceremonial of 21 May prescribed by Constantine Porphyrogenetos, the patriarch censed their tombs as well as Constantine's: P. Grierson, “The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042),” *DOP* 16 (1962), 27–28; *De cer.*, ed. Reiske, 533.

¹²² This has been shown for early medieval Italy: B. Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1984), 135–49. For Byzantium see P. Magdalino, “Church, Bath and Diakonia in Medieval Constantinople,” in *Church and People in Byzantium*, ed. R. Morris (forthcoming).

¹²³ Theoph. Cont., 447.

¹²⁴ Trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 139–40; cf. G. Florovsky, *Christianity and Culture* (Belmont, Mass., 1974), 115–16, and Murray, *Rebirth and Afterlife*, 35.

¹²⁵ C. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (London, 1980), 272–74; W. Treadgold, “The Macedonian Renaissance,”

the full ideological implications of their exoticism have not yet been explored. The statues and sculptures correspond to the collection of ancient epigrams made by the clergy of the Nea Ekklesia:¹²⁶ the close association of the two buildings is surely not fortuitous. The personifications of springs and rivers correspond to the many personified representations in such famous manuscripts as the Paris Psalter and the Joshua Roll.¹²⁷ This "antique" mode of representation, and the generally "antique" look of the building, corresponded to an attempt on the part of the Macedonian emperors to identify their regime with ancient precedents rather than recent developments. Most important, the portrayal of the emperor and empress corresponds to those aspects of Leo's career that brought him into conflict with the Church and cast a cloud over his reputation. For it is a curious fact that Constantine VII never found time to write an encomiastic biography of his father comparable to that of his grandfather. In "pro-Macedonian" historiography, Leo received less fulsome treatment than either his father or his son, while in certain ecclesiastical circles he was openly vilified as a tyrant.¹²⁸ If the empress portrayed in the bath was indeed Zoe Karbounopsina, her very portrayal was controversial. More fundamentally, the iconography of the program as a whole expressed the "caesaropapist" conception of imperial power which ultimately lay behind Leo's whole stand over his fourth marriage.¹²⁹

Leo's reasons for marrying Zoe have not satisfactorily been explained. He did not do so in order to legitimize their son, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, because he had already secured this by undertaking to put her aside. He was undoubtedly influenced by love for her, but one wonders whether this alone would have moved him to defy canon law if he had not also believed himself more canonical than the canons. There is much in his career to suggest that he went further than most emperors in claiming, and exercising, supreme spiritual authority. He legislated on a variety of canonical matters.¹³⁰ He appointed his brother Ste-

phen as patriarch,¹³¹ and promoted, somewhat controversially, the canonization of his first wife, Theophano.¹³² He took himself very seriously as a hymnographer and preacher. He performed in person the encaenia of several churches founded by his officials.¹³³ He presumed to give spiritual advice to the head of a monastic community.¹³⁴ His role in all this was decidedly different from that created for the emperor in the so-called *Epanagoge*, in which the patriarch rather than the emperor is cast in the image of Christ, and their relationship is seen in terms of a strict division of labor between the spiritual and the temporal.¹³⁵ The author of the *Epanagoge* was probably Patriarch Photios, whom Leo VI, on becoming emperor, dismissed from office. It has been suggested that Leo's antipathy toward Photios was ideological as well as personal.¹³⁶ At all events—and whichever empress was portrayed in the bath—it seems clear that the conception of imperial authority expressed in the iconographic program would not have been much to the liking of the Byzantine clergy, whether "extremists" or "moderates," "conservatives" or "liberals."¹³⁷

Perhaps the best indication of the monument's place in the ideological spectrum of tenth-century Byzantium is the fate that it suffered after Leo's death. If the building can, as argued above, be identified with the bath at "Marina's" and with that of the Oikonomeion, its subsequent history would seem to have been one of neglect and decline under Leo's immediate successors, notably Romanos I Lekapenos, then restoration by Constantine VII and continued reuse under Romanos II and Nikephoros II Phokas, until its final demolition by John I Tzimiskes.¹³⁸ It is surely no coincidence that the emperor who valued it most highly was not

Renaissances before the Renaissance, ed. W. Treadgold (Stanford, 1984), 75–98.

¹²⁶ Lemma of *Anthologia graeca*, VII.429.

¹²⁷ Weitzmann, *Studies*, 157–59, 177–83, 206–7.

¹²⁸ B. Flusin, "Un fragment inédit de la Vie d'Euthyme le Patriarche?" *TM* 9 (1985), 119–31; 10 (1987), 233–60.

¹²⁹ For the events, see N. Oikonomides, "Leo VI and the Narthex Mosaic of Saint Sophia," *DOP* 30 (1976), 161 ff; for Leo's caesaropapism, see in general Schminck, "'Rota,'" 227–28.

¹³⁰ Novels 2–17, 68, 75, 79, 87–90; cf. N. Oikonomides, "Leo VI's Legislation of 907 Forbidding Fourth Marriages: An Inter-

polation in the *Procheiros Nomos* (IV, 25–7)," *DOP* 30 (1976), 173–93; Schminck, *Studies*, 98 ff.

¹³¹ Grosdidier de Matons, "Trois études," 198 ff.

¹³² Theoph. Cont., 856, 860 (Cont. Geo. Mon.); E. Kurtz, *Zwei griechische Texte über die Hl. Theophano*, MASP, Classe historico-philologique, 8th ser., III (St. Petersburg, 1898), passim but esp. 43; S. Kougeas, Αἱ ἐν τοῖς σχολίοις τοῦ Ἀρέθᾳ λαογραφικαὶ εἰδήσεις, *Λαογραφία* 4 (1913), 261. If we can believe the *Vita Ignatii*, a precedent had been set by Photios, who ingratiated himself with Basil I by canonizing the latter's son Constantine: PG 105, col. 573; Beck, *Kirche*, 275.

¹³³ Akakios, 137 f, 243 ff, 248 ff; Theoph. Cont., 862, 866, 870 (Cont. Geo. Mon.).

¹³⁴ Grosdidier de Matons, "Trois études," 206 ff.

¹³⁵ Schminck, "'Rota,'" 211 ff.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 227–28.

¹³⁷ P. Karlin-Hayter, "Le synode à Constantinople de 886 à 912 et le rôle de Nicolas le Mystique dans l'affaire de la Tétragamic," *JÖB* 19 (1970), 90, rpr. in *Studies in Byzantine Political History* (London, 1981).

¹³⁸ Above, pp. 99 f and notes 16–17.

only Leo's son but also very much his heir as a stickler for ancient imperial tradition and a patron of the "classical" revival. It is also, I would suggest, hardly a coincidence that the emperor who let it run down (Romanos I) and the emperor who destroyed it (John I) were both "usurpers" who felt the need to atone for their "usurpation" by conspicuous philanthropy and deference to the patriarchs who crowned them.¹³⁹ Both, moreover, arranged to be buried in their own religious foundations, the Myrelaion monastery and the Chalke church, rather than in the imperial mausolea near the Church of the Holy Apostles.¹⁴⁰ It is true that Nikephoros II, who kept the bath working, was also a "usurper." Yet he was anything but deferential to the church. He was also a traditionalist in that he made additions to the Great Palace and was buried at the Holy Apostles, probably on his own instructions, for he made no religious foundations such as to suggest that he had other plans.¹⁴¹

That Leo's bath was neglected and later pulled down in ideological reaction to the kind of tradition that it represented seems likely in view of the similar fate suffered by an institution with which, as we have seen, it had some affinity—the imperial Brumalia. A century before Leo's reign, the author of the *Life of St. Stephen the Younger* had described it as "a ritual inimical to God,"¹⁴² and the description of the ceremony in the *De cerimoniis* carries the following postscript:¹⁴³

Note that this order of the Brumalia was altered and abolished in the reign of the Lord Romanos. For he, on pretence of piety, and deeming it not right that the Romans should celebrate the Brumalia according to the ancient customs of the Ausonians, ordered them to cease. He did not give thought to those great and renowned emperors, not Constantine the Great and

renowned, not Marcian, not Leo Leomakellos, not Justinian, nor the other Christ-loving emperors, whom I would go so far as to call semidivine. But whatever he approved was considered by him law and canon and righteousness and piety. Under the Christ-loving Lord Constantine the order of the Brumalia experienced revival.

Whether the ceremony was kept up after Constantine's reign is unknown, but it is likely that "pretence of piety" (as well as considerations of cost) weighed more heavily with his successors than the memory of "semidivine" predecessors.

The Bath of Leo the Wise was certainly one of the most ambitious, and probably one of the more influential, products of the "classical revival" associated with the Macedonian emperors. The relative obscurity into which it sank is a reflection not of its insignificance but of its controversial nature and the faint *damnatio memoriae* attaching to the emperor who built it, or at least to that side of him that it represented.¹⁴⁴ Its interest lies principally in the implications it holds for our understanding of the classicism of the "Macedonian Renaissance" in its mature phase. Before Leo's reign, the deliberate revival of that late antique culture which had declined in the Byzantine Dark Ages was as much an ecclesiastical as an imperial phenomenon.¹⁴⁵ Under its initiator, Patriarch Nikephoros, and under its greatest intellectual exponent, Patriarch Photios, it mainly served the ideal of the triumphal restoration of Orthodoxy,¹⁴⁶ an ideal in which the emperor played a glorious but essentially *executive* role. It is difficult to distinguish the hand of Basil I from that of Photios in the cultural patronage of the first Macedonian emperor.¹⁴⁷ But under Leo VI, who turned the lessons he had learned from Photios against his old master, classicism became the style of Constantinian and Justinianic autocracy, of an ideal that looked back not just beyond Iconoclasm, but beyond the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843. By 900 the spirit of the "Macedonian

¹³⁹ For John Tzimisces, see Leo the Deacon, 98–100. The case of Romanos is less clear, but Zonaras is surely right in connecting his philanthropy with his violation of the oaths that he had taken to Constantine VII (Bonn ed., III, 478). Although Patriarch Nicholas I at first opposed Romanos, he subsequently played a decisive part in Romanos' rise to power and undoubtedly made him pay for this by imposing an end to the Tetragamy schism in a way that vindicated the patriarch's stand in the affair: Theoph. Cont., 393 ff; S. Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign* (Cambridge, 1929), 60, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Grierson, "Tombs and Obits," 28–29. On the Myrelaion, see N. Oikonomides in *TM* 6 (1976), 189; C. L. Striker, *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii)* (Princeton, 1982); C. Mango, "The Life of St. Andrew the Fool Reconsidered," *RSBS* 2 (1982), 303–4 (rpr. in *Byzantium and Its Image*); idem, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVe-VIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1985), 59. On Tzimisces and the Chalke church (whose original founder was Romanos I), see C. Mango, *The Brazen House* (Copenhagen, 1959), 149 ff, and *TM* 6 (1976), 362.

¹⁴¹ Grierson, loc. cit.

¹⁴² Above, note 10

¹⁴³ Ed. Reiske, 606.

¹⁴⁴ The study of Byzantine *damnatio memoriae*, and its possible implications for our understanding of our source material, is still in its infancy. For some pertinent discussion, see C. Bourdara, "Quelques cas de *damnatio memoriae* à l'époque de la dynastie macédonienne," *JÖB* 32.2 (1982), 337–46; Schminck, "Rota," 227.

¹⁴⁵ See, in general, Speck, "Ikonoklasmus" (above, note 7), passim.

¹⁴⁶ For the ideological framework, see, e.g., Photios: C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 289–315; *Photii epistulae et Amphilochia*, I, ed. B. Laourdas and L. Westerink (Leipzig, 1983), 41.

¹⁴⁷ See L. Brubaker, "Politics, Patronage, and Art in Ninth-Century Byzantium," *DOP* 39 (1985), 1–14; P. Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I," *JÖB* 37 (1987), 51–64.

Renaissance" was as different from the spirit of 843 as the decoration of Leo's bath was from the mosaics of the restored Chrysotriklinos.¹⁴⁸ The latter was a monument to imperial piety. The former was a monument to the wisdom of an emperor with supernatural powers over the created world. As such, its future lay not in the official tradition of Byzantine orthodoxy but in the subculture of Byzantine legend.¹⁴⁹

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APPENDIX 1

Text and Translation

A text and translation of the poem are appended here in order to spare readers the inconvenience of constant reference to a separate publication. The apparatus and footnotes are not intended to be comprehensive but simply to register corrections and additions to the version presented in the *Maistor* article (227–31).

One correction that deserves greater prominence concerns the alphabetical acrostic formed by the initial letters of the strophes. My previous assertion that the text originally contained strophes corresponding to the missing initials η and ω is clearly untenable.¹⁵⁰ As Nissen noted, Choiosphaktes was following the metrical form perfected by Sophronios of Jerusalem. This was based on quantity as well as stress, and therefore avoided the use of the two immutably long vowels in the first syllable.¹⁵¹

(Ἔτερον ἀνακρεόντειον τοῦ αὐτοῦ μαγίστρου
Λέοντος)

εἰς τὸ λοετρὸν τὸ ἐν τῇ βασιλείῳ αὐλῇ ὑπὸ
Λέοντος τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος οἰκοδομηθέν

Ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν δονεῖται
μέλος ὀργάνων· τί τοῦτο;
λεγέτω τις, ὃς διέγνων,

¹⁴⁸ *Anth. gr.*, I.106; trans. Mango, *Art of the Byzantine Empire*, 184; cf. Gavrilović, op. cit. (above, note 48), 89–90; Schminck, "Rota," 215 note 33.

¹⁴⁹ Mango, "Legend," passim; Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 243 ff.

¹⁵⁰ *Maistor*, 232. It goes without saying that the responsibility for publishing the assertion is entirely mine, and not that of the distinguished scholar whom I thanked for drawing my attention to the omission.

¹⁵¹ Nissen, 27, 60.

φρασάτω τις, εἴπερ οἶδεν·
Βασιλεὺς Λέων ἐπ' ἔργοις 5
φρένα Δαιδάλου παρήλθε·
λιγυρὰν χέλυν τινάξω
παταγοσφύρῳ χορεῖα·
Γεγανωμένοι πολῖται
περὶ τὴν θέαν μολεῖτε, 10
λοετρῶν δόμους ὁρᾶτε,
μέλος ὀργάνων κροτεῖτε·
Δόμος ὡς πόλος φαάνθη·
ἀκροβλαστοχρυσομόρφους
κυκλικῶς λαίγγας ὄψει 15
μετ' ἀγαλμάτων γὰρ ἄρτι·
Ὁ φρεσὶ καὶ σοφίῃ κῦδος ἀφύσσας
ἐσθλοπόνους καμάτων ἐκτολυπεύει·
Ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας δὲ βάντα
πρόδρομος μακρὸς σε κρύψει· 20
ὅθι δὴ χάρις προλάμπει
γλυφικῆς τέχνης τὸ θαῦμα·
Ζαθέων ἐκεῖ γερόντων
ἀπιδῶν θέας θεάση,
ζαμενεῖς κλόνους, σφαγὰς τε 25
πολέμων ἐγερσιθύμων·
Θολοκογχόχρυσον ἔργον
ἐν ὑποστόις διαύλοις
ἐρατοῖς ἰδῶν, καλύψει
φαέων βολὰς σαόζων. 30
Υδάτων θερμοβόλων ρεῖθρα προχεῖται
καθαρὰ προῖκα· πόλις δεῦρο γενοῦ μοι·
Ἰδίως θέαν Γεούχου
ἐπὶ τὴν πρόκογχον ὄψει,
ῥοδέην φύσιν φοροῦσαν, 35
ξίφος ἐν χεροῖν κρατοῦσαν·
Καλύκων χάριν προπέμπει
Βασίλισσα κείθεν αὖθις,
γλυκερωτάτοις προσώποις
ῥοδέην φυὴν φοροῦσα· 40
Λόγος οὐ γράφει τὸ κάλλος·
φιλάδελφε, τίς σε γράψας
ἐριθιγὲς ὥσπερ ἔρνος
ἀνέθηκεν εἰσορᾶσθαι;
Μετὰ τὴν θέαν δὲ τήνδε, 45
ποταμῶν θέας χαράξας
φοβεροστροφούς προσώποις
μετρικούς ἐγραψεν αἶνους·
Δόγματα θεολόγα γράψατε, κοῦροι·
ζαθέων ἐκ στομάτων ὄμβρος ἐπέστη· 50
Νεπόδων ἄγρην θεάση
καλάμῳ, βρόχῳ τε, κύρτῳ·
ἐπὶ νήσον αὖ ἐκάστην
ἐρατὴν τράπεζαν ὄψει·
Ξενοτερπὲς ἄλλο θαῦμα, 55
ὅτι πηγόρειθρα κάλλη

πολύμορφον εἶδος ἔσχεν
κορικτὴν χάριν φοροῦντα·

Ὁ θυρῶν ψόφος δὲ τέχνη
πολύμουσον ἔσμα πέμπει,
τὸ δ' ἔπος λέγει τό, δόξα,
βασιλεῦ, ἄναξ μεδόντων·

Παρὰ Δεσπότης ποσὶν δὲ
χλοεροῖς κλάδοισι νίζει
μελοτραυλόφωνος ὄρνις
λυροκαλλιμόλπα τρυζών·

Ψευδαλέων ἐπέων ῥίψατε λέσχην,
τεχνικῶν νῦν λογίων δράξατο Λέων·

Ῥόδος ὑδάτων ἀπειρῶν
μέλος ὀργάνων προπέμπει·
ἀφανῶς, ἄνευ κροτοῦντος,
βασιλεῖ πλέκων τὸν αἶνον·

Σοφίῃ δράκων ἀνέρπει,
ὁ λέων μέγα βρυχάται,
γέρανός δὲ σαπιρόχρους
ἐπικλαγγάσασα τέρπει·

Τανύερνος αὐθις ὄρηξ
φορέει γένη λυρῶδη
λιγυρὸν περικροτοῦντα
ἀπὸ χρυσέων πετῆλων·

Ὑπὸ τὴν μέσῃν δὲ λάμπει
ὑδάτων ἐν ὀκταδόγῳ
πολύθερμον οἶδμα ῥεῦμα,
ἄκος οὐ μικρὸν νοσοῦσιν·

Πῶλος ὁ κυκλοφόρος γῆθ', ὅτι Λέων
ἄτροπα φωτοφόρων νήματα δέσκει·

Φοβερὸν θέαμα, φίλοι,
γρυπὸς ἄσθμα νάμα βάλλει
πυριλαμπές, ἐκφοβοῦν περ
βροτέην φύσιν παρόντων

Χάριν ἀπλέτου δ' ὑγείας
πολύλουτρον ἔσχε κάλλος,
μερόπων νόσους ἀλεῦον,
δυνάμεις ἐπιβραβεῦον·

Ψεκάδων ἀφ' ὑγροθέρων
μελέων τόνος παρέλκων
παλίνορσον εὖρε ῥῶσιν
μακρὸν εἰς χρόνον νεάζων·

Μεδέων ῥητορίας ἤλθεν ἐς ἄκρον·
ἀτέχων ὧ λογίων φεύγετε πλάσται·

87 sic cod., Nissen 89 ἐκφοβῶν cod., corr. Nissen

(Another anacreontic poem of the same *Magistros* Leo) on the bath built by the emperor Leo in the imperial palace

The music of instruments resounds throughout the city. Why? Let him who has recognised say, and if he knows let him speak. The emperor Leo in his

works¹⁵² has surpassed the imagination of Daedalus. I shall strike the shrill lyre in a pounding dance rhythm. Joyful citizens, come to the sight, behold these bath-houses, strike up the music of instruments. The edifice is aglow like the vault of heaven. All around you will see gilded stones sprouting at the tips, with statues now too.

He who has drawn glory by wit and wisdom now finishes off his heroic arduous toils.

As you go towards the doors, a long entrance-hall will envelop you, from which charm shines forth, the wonder of sculpture. There as you look you will behold the shapes of venerable old men, the raging fury and slaughter of wrath-raising wars. . . . As you see the gilded work of dome and conch in the delightful colonnaded corridors, you will have to screen the rays of your eyes to safeguard them.

Streams of heat-radiating water pour forth, pure and rich. O city, be here with me.

See especially the sight of the earth-ruler on the proconch, wearing a rosy appearance, and holding a sword in his hands. From there the empress in turn throws out the beauty of petals, in her sweet face wearing a rosy appearance. Words cannot describe the beauty. O sisterly one, who has painted you and set you up to be gazed at like a luxuriant shoot? After this scene, he has drawn the forms of rivers, with fiercely-turned faces, and inscribed metrical encomia.

Write divine doctrines, O youths; rain precipitates from godlike mouths.

You will see the catching of fish with rod, net, and weel; on every island you will behold a delightful spread. Another strange and delightful wonder is that the beauties of the flowing springs take on many forms in their appearance, and wear a girlish grace. The noise of the doors with artful contrivance sends out a musical song; the song says, "Glory of rulers, O Basileus, King."¹⁵³ At the lord's feet, among green fronds, bathes a sweet warbling bird, murmuring lyrical songs.

Reject all babble of false words; Leo has now gathered all rhetorical eloquence.

The flow of countless waters sends forth the melody of instruments, imperceptibly, without any players, weaving the emperor's praise. The serpent creeps up in his wisdom, the lion roars loudly,¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²Or, "The emperor, a lion in his deeds."

¹⁵³Or, with different punctuation in the text, "Glory, O Basileus, King of rulers." Either way, δόξα is reminiscent of Psalm 23:7; see note 96 above.

¹⁵⁴Or, "the lion roars 'great'."

the sapphire-coloured crane delights the ear with its cry.¹⁵⁵ Then a tall young sapling bears a melodious crop, gracefully tinkling among golden leaves. Under the centre glitters a hot, hot swelling current of waters in an octaconch, no small cure for the sick.

Let the revolving axis of heaven rejoice that Leo perceives the unalterable threads of the bearers of light.

O friends, it is an awesome sight. A griffin's breath projects a blazing jet, terrifying the mortal nature of those present. The manifold beauty of the bath has the grace of healing; it takes away

men's sickness and grants strength. The vitality of the limbs, drawing from hot liquid drops, has found vigour returning, and is youthful for years to come.

The guardian of rhetoric has excelled himself; begone, O forgers of artless words.

APPENDIX 2

Other Corrigenda to *Maistor* Article

P. 226 note 5: for "*ibid.*" read "Kolias, *op. cit.*"

P. 229 note 8: delete last sentence.

P. 238 line 4: for "is" read "are also."

P. 240 note 49, last line: for "172–75" read "176."

¹⁵⁵ Κλάγγη, "crying" or "screaming," is the standard attribute of cranes: see *Iliad*, 3.3, and above, p. 108 and note 81.